DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 057 TM 009 965

AUTHOR Johnson, Lary; Pearson, Diane
TITLE Fundamental Schools in the Minneapolis School System: An Evaluation 1978-79.
INSTITUTION Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn. Dept. of Research and Evaluation.
PUB DATE Aug 79
NOTE 105p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Gains; *Basic Skills; Conventional Instruction; Curriculum Design; Discipline; Elementary Education; Elementary Schools; Homework; Institutional Evaluation; National Norms; *Parent Attitudes; Parent Participation; *Program Evaluation; *School Attitudes; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes; Test Results; *Traditional Schools
IDENTIFIERS Back to Basics Schools; *Fundamental Schools; *Minneapolis Public Schools MN; Minnesota (Minneapolis)

ABSTRACT

Three fundamentals schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota were evaluated using parent, student, and teacher surveys, standardized test results, and enrollment records. Parents reported their reasons for choosing the school--the most popular reasons were its emphasis on reading, arithmetic, writing, discipline, self-contained classrooms, citizenship, and character development. Parents were generally satisfied with homework load, opportunity for involvement with teachers, their children's progress, and communication about this progress; 75% planned to enroll their children the following year. Attitudes varied widely among the three schools, but students and teachers as a group were less enthusiastic than were parents. Teachers in one school were dissatisfied with parental involvement, discipline policy, and homework completion. All schools exceeded the gains expected by a national norm group, on standardized reading and mathematics tests. (Test results and response rates of selected survey questions are included.) (CP)

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# Fundamentals Schools in the Minneapolis School System: An Evaluation 1978-79

Lary Johnson

Diane Pearson

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August 1979

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**MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

An Equal Opportunity School District

1979

Minneapolis Public Schools

Fundamentals Schools in the Minneapolis
School System: An Evaluation 1978-79

## SUMMARY


Three "fundamentals" schools operated in Minneapolis during the 1978-79 school year, one in each of the three decentralized areas. The major goals and proposed activities were similar for the three programs: basic skills and responsible behavior; self-contained, structured classrooms; homework, letter grades, discipline, and parent involvement.

The Minneapolis Public Schools' Research and Evaluation Department conducted an evaluation of the three schools with funds provided by the McKnight Foundation.

### East Area Fundamentals School

The fundamentals program in the East Area, located at the Andersen C School, was established in the fall of 1978. The following information was used to evaluate the program: a questionnaire returned by 58% of the parents, staff interviews, a student questionnaire, standardized tests, and school records.

Three-fourths of the students in grades 1-6 attended a school other than one of the Andersen complex schools the previous year. Student turnover during the year was great. Sixty percent of the students who enrolled in the fall of 1978 continued in the fundamentals program the entire year. (See Pages 5 - 7)

More than three-fourths of the parents said that the following expectations were reasons for choosing the fundamentals school: emphasis on basic skills, emphasis on discipline, self-contained classrooms, and emphasis on citizenship and character development. The expectation that there would be an emphasis on reading, arithmetic, and writing was given as the one most important reason by 59% of the parents. (See Pages 8, 9)

The teachers reported that the city-wide and East Area guidelines were generally used to determine the amount of time that was spent on each subject area. No special objectives were set for curriculum areas other than a general commitment to concentrate on reading and math. Teacher classroom schedules reflected varying amounts of time allotted for different subject areas. About three-fourths of the parents expressed the opinion that the "right amount" of time was provided for children to develop in reading, arithmetic, handwriting, language arts, spelling, art, and music. (See Pages 10-15)

Although it was expected that students would have homework on a regular basis, the actual amount of homework varied considerably among the teachers. Most teachers reported difficulty in getting children to return homework assignments. Three-fourths of the parents felt that the right amount of homework was given, one-fourth said that not enough was expected. (See Pages 16-18)

Ninety percent of the parents said that they were satisfied with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program. Compared with previous years, the parents did not indicate a greater number of contacts with their child's school. The teachers were generally disappointed about the level of parent involvement with the fundamentals school. 17-21

Student progress was reported to parents by conferences, report cards (with letter grades for grades 3-6), and bi-weekly mini-reports. Ninety-four percent of the parents were satisfied with communications about their child's progress in school. 22

All of the teachers indicated that there were frequent interferences with and disruptions of student learning. Some disruptions were related to active and noisy behavior patterns of individual students, while others were related to the school environment; poor acoustics, other programs. Almost all teachers felt that the discipline policy needed to be improved. Eighty percent of the parents said they were satisfied with the fundamentals school's discipline policy. 23-27

The range of reading skill levels within each classroom and between different grade levels was substantial. At all grade levels, student gains in reading comprehension and word study skills between fall 1978 and spring 1979 generally equaled or exceeded the expected growth of the national norm group. Gains in vocabulary were less than the expected growth of the national norm group at three of the five grade levels. These reading test results should be interpreted cautiously because the number of children tested at some grade levels was small, due to student mobility during the year. 32-36

About three-fourths of the parents indicated that they were satisfied with how much their child had progressed in various subject and work behavior areas. Teachers expressed satisfaction with how much some children had learned (particularly those who were in school the entire year) and dissatisfaction with others (behavior and attendance factors).

Sixty-seven percent of the parents indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the fundamentals school next year. Twenty-three percent of the parents graded the school as Excellent (A), 44% graded it Above Average (B), 28% said Average (C), and 5% said Below Average (D) or Failure (F). 37-39

Students generally expressed "mixed-to-positive" attitudes toward the fundamentals school. A large majority of the students said that they liked school and that they were happy with how much they learned. Thirty-eight percent of the grade 3-6 students graded the school as Excellent (A), 19% said Above Average (B), 16% said Average (C), 6% said Below Average (D), and 21% said Failure (F). Twenty-nine percent of the students reported that they would like to attend the fundamentals school next year, 39% said they would not, and 32% were not sure. 33, 38-42

All but one teacher indicated that they would like to teach in the fundamentals school next year, but many wanted certain changes to be made. The staff felt that they should build on what they had learned in the first year to make the fundamentals school successful in the future. 42-43

## West Area Fundamentals School

The West Area Fundamentals School at Barton completed its second year of operation in 1978-79. A questionnaire returned by 87% of the parents, a staff questionnaire, and standardized tests were used to evaluate the second year of the program.

More than ninety percent of the parents said that they were satisfied with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program. These parent opinions about parent-school contacts were similar to opinions expressed after the first year (1977-78). Teachers reported the same number of contacts with parents in 1978-79 as in the previous year. Five classroom teachers indicated satisfaction and six indicated dissatisfaction with the amount of support that parents have given the fundamentals program. 45-47

Nine of the eleven classroom teachers felt that most, but not all, of the staff shared the same philosophy about basic skills. The most frequently cited differences were that a few teachers did not have "fundamental" philosophies regarding such things as homework, discipline, grading, and classroom structure. 48

Teachers reported that homework was assigned 2-5 days a week, and that 85-100% of the students usually returned the assignments. More than three-fourths of the parents felt that the amount of homework their child was expected to do was about right. 48-49

Five teachers indicated that disruptive student behavior interfered with learning "frequently," five teachers said "occasionally," and one teacher said "rarely." Half of the classroom teachers felt that student behavior was more disruptive to learning in 1978-79 than in 1977-78. Ninety-seven percent of the parents and ten of eleven teachers said that they were satisfied with the discipline policy. 49-51

At the beginning of the school year, the fundamentals school students, as a group, scored better than the national norm group on standardized reading and mathematic tests. During the 1978-79 school year, the fundamentals students progressed as well as, or better than, the national norm group. The grade equivalent gains equaled or exceeded the expected gain of the national norm group on most test-grade combinations. 51-56

About ninety percent of the parents expressed satisfaction with their child's progress in various academic and "work-study habit" areas. 54

How much did reading skills improve for students who attended the fundamentals school for two years? Overall, they maintained, or improved, their standing when compared with the national norm group. For example, on the reading comprehension test, the 1978-79 students at grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 made gains on the national norms ranging from three to thirteen percentile points between fall 1977 and spring 1979. 58-60

Seventy-seven percent of the parents planned to enroll their child in the West Area Fundamentals School next year. Forty-one percent of the parents gave the fundamentals school a grade of Excellent (A), 48% said it was Above Average (B), 9% said Average (C), and 1% said Below Average (D).

## North Area Fundamentals School

The North Area Fundamentals School completed its second year of operation in 1978-79. The K-6 program was expanded to include seventh grade during the second year. A questionnaire returned by 89% of the parents, a staff questionnaire, a student questionnaire, and standardized tests were used to evaluate the second year of the program.

The substantial number of contacts between parents and the fundamentals school that occurred in the first year (1977-78) continued in the second year. Almost all parents said that they were satisfied with the opportunities for parent involvement and the amount of communications from school about their child's progress. Nine of the twelve classroom teachers were satisfied with the amount of support that parents have given the fundamentals school. 63-65

Most teachers assigned homework 2-3 days each. Parents and students generally felt that the amount of homework was about right. 66-67

All teachers and 97% of the parents felt that disruptive student behavior interfered with student learning "rarely" or only "occasionally." No teachers and only a few parents indicated that student behavior "constantly" or "frequently" interfered with learning. All teachers were satisfied with the discipline policy. 67-68

Students indicated that negative student interactions did occur at the school. For example, about 20% of the students in grades 3-6 said they have been called a bad name and have been hit or pushed by another student "many times." The student-reported occurrences of these incidents were similar to those reported after the first year (1977-78). 69-70

At the beginning of the school year, the fundamentals school students, as a group, scored somewhat better than the national norm group on a standardized reading test. Between fall 1978 and spring 1979, the students progressed as well as, or better than, the national norm group on all tests at all grade levels tested. 70-73

Ninety-three percent of the parents and all teachers expressed satisfaction with how much the children learned in reading and arithmetic. Eighty-nine percent of the grade 3-6 students said that they were happy with how much they learned. 75-77

How much did the reading skills improve for students who attended the North Area Fundamentals School two years? Overall, they maintained, or improved, their standing when compared with the national norm group. For example, on the reading comprehension test, the students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 gained 9, 13, 17, and 7 percentile points, respectively, on the national norms between fall 1977 and spring 1979. 75, 78-79

Ninety-three percent of the parents indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the fundamentals school next year. Sixty-one percent of the parents graded the school as Excellent (A), 34% graded it Above Average (B), and 5% said Average (C). 79, 81

Students generally expressed positive attitudes toward the fundamentals school. The majority of the students felt that some of the work in school was interesting and challenging, and that some

work was not interesting and challenging. Two-thirds of the students said that they were given the right amount of work to do; one-third felt they were given too much work. Fifty-nine percent of the students reported that they would like to attend the fundamentals school next year, 22% said they would not, and 20% were not sure. Forty-two percent of the students graded the school as Excellent (A), 32% graded it Above Average (B), 14% said Average (C), 5% said Below Average (D), and 8% said Failure (F). 79, 82-83

August 1979

Research and Evaluation Department
Curriculum/Student Services

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Acknowledgments

The evaluators are grateful to the staff members at the three fundamentals schools for their cooperation during the data collection phase of this study. Special thanks to the principals: Eloise Nelson at the East Area Fundamentals School, Richard Hanson at the West Area Fundamentals School, and Roger Olson at the North Area Fundamentals School.

Other Research and Evaluation Department staff members who contributed substantially to this report were Diane Boardman, Carol Dordan, and Linda Sundean.

# FUNDAMENTALS SCHOOLS IN THE MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOL SYSTEM: AN EVALUATION 1978-79

Alternative educational programs labeled as "fundamentals schools" were first offered as choices to Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) students in 1977-78. The North Area Fundamentals School was established at Cleveland School and the West Area Fundamentals School began at Barton School. The third decentralized area of the school system, the East Area, offered a fundamentals program at the Andersen C School in 1978-79.[1]

## The Evaluation Plan

At the request of the superintendent of schools, and with support from a grant by the McKnight Foundation, the MPS Research and Evaluation Department conducted an evaluation of the three fundamentals programs. It was decided that a larger share of the evaluation resources would be used for the East Area Fundamentals School, since it was in its first year of operation. Also, the other two schools were evaluated the previous year. The following evaluation questions were identified for the East Area Fundamentals School:

- What students attended the fundamentals school?
- What was the educational program?
- How well did the students achieve in reading basic skills?
- To what extent were parents of fundamentals school students involved in the educational program and school activities?
- What discipline procedures were implemented?
- What views and feelings did students have about their school?
- Why did parents enroll children in a fundamentals school?
- What opinions did parents have about the fundamentals school?

The evaluation resources for the North Area and West Area Fundamentals Schools were concentrated on measuring student achievement and student, parent, and staff opinions of the school.

---

[1] The following names will be used interchangeably throughout the report:
North Area Fundamentals School and Cleveland,
West Area Fundamentals School and Barton,
East Area Fundamentals School and Andersen C.

Measurement Procedures

Several methods were used to collect information to answer the identified evaluation questions. Student records in the schools and student data from the MPS Information Services Center were primary sources used to describe the student population at Andersen C. Information about the Andersen C educational program was obtained by interviews with staff members.

Questionnaires were designed to collect staff, student, and parent opinions about the fundamentals schools. Classroom teacher questionnaires were returned by all twelve teachers at the North Area Fundamentals School and by 11 of 12 teachers at the West Area Fundamentals School.

Questionnaires were sent to the parents of all students enrolled in the fundamentals school. However, since the items referred to a specific child, only one questionnaire was sent to families with more than one child enrolled in the fundamentals school. In these multi-child situations the child to whom the questionnaire referred was randomly selected. The questionnaires were mailed to the parents in May 1979. Each questionnaire was coded with a number of make follow-up efforts easier. Parents were given the option of removing the number before they returned their questionnaire. Two follow-up letters were sent to all non-respondents. Completed questionnaires were returned by 89% of the surveyed parents at the North Area Fundamentals School (274 of 309 parents), by 88% of the parents at the West Area Fundamentals School (235 of 268 parents), and by 58% of the parents at the East Area Fundamentals School (67 of 115 parents).

The student questionnaire, which asked for opinions about school in general and reactions to specific aspects of the fundamentals school, was administered in all grades 3-6 classrooms by the evaluator at the East and North Area Fundamentals Schools. Teachers were not present while the students completed the questionnaire. Also, students were told they they should not put their names on the questionnaire.

The efforts to evaluate student achievement were concentrated on reading and mathematics skills, primarily because test information was collected in these areas as part of the MPS citywide assessment efforts. The following standardized reading achievement tests were given to students in grades 1-6. All tests in the fall were given as part of the school district's testing program. The spring tests were given as part of the evaluation plan.

| Grade | October 1978 | May 1979 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Metropolitan Readiness Test, Form B | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Primary Level I, Form B (North Area Fundamentals School Only) |
| 2 | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Primary Level I, Form A | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading Primary Level II, Form B |
| 3 | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Primary Level II, Form A | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Primary Level III, Form B |
| 4 | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Primary Level III, Form A | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Intermediate Level I, Form B |
| 5 | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Intermediate Level I, Form A | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Intermediate Level II, Form B |
| 6 | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Intermediate Level II, Form A | Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Intermediate Level II, Form B |

The Stanford Achievement Tests in Reading have three subtests: Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, and Word Study Skills. The Vocabulary test items are dictated, in order to measure a student's vocabulary independent of reading ability. The Reading Comprehension test contains written paragraphs and requires the student to gather information and comprehend the meaning of that information. The Reading Comprehension test at the two lowest levels (Primary Level I and II) has two sections; Word Reading (identification of simple words) and Reading Comprehension. The Word Study Skills test measures skills in the area of phonics; the sounds of letters and letter combinations.

At grade two through six, student reading growth was determined by comparing student achievement in the fall of 1978 with achievement in the spring of 1979. For example, third graders took Primary Level II in the fall and Primary Level III in the spring. The test level was changed from fall to spring because each level was standardized at the end of one school year and at the beginning of the next school year, and not at the beginning and end of the same school year.

| | Standardization Norm Dates |
|---|---|
| Primary Level I | End Gr. 1, Beg. Gr. 2 |
| Primary Level II | End Gr. 2, Beg. Gr. 3 |
| Primary Level III | End Gr. 3, Beg. Gr. 4 |
| Intermediate Level I | End Gr. 4, Beg. Gr. 5 |
| Intermediate Level II | End Gr. 5, Beg. Gr. 6, End Gr. 6 |

If the third graders had taken Primary Level II in both the fall and spring, no appropriate norms would have been available for the spring scores. However, spring norms are available for third graders on the Primary Level III test.

Third graders and sixth graders at Barton were administered the SRA Mathematics Test in the fall of 1978 and again in the spring of 1979. At each grade level, the same level and form of the test were used at both testing times.

| | |
|---|---|
| Grade 3 | SRA Mathematics Test, Primary II, Form E |
| Grade 6 | SRA Mathematics Test, Green Level, Form E |

The spring administration was part of the school district's citywide testing program. The fall testing was done by the Barton staff as part of their evaluation efforts and well before this evaluation was planned. Students at Cleveland and Andersen C were not tested in math in the fall.

## Organization of This Report

The evaluation data for the three fundamentals schools were treated separately and the results are reported separately in the three major sections of this report. The first section presents the evaluation results for the East Area Fundamentals School. The second section, beginning on page 44, describes the results for the West Area Fundamentals School. The third section, beginning on page 61, gives the results for the North Area Fundamentals School. A summary of the results for each school can be found on pages ii-vi at the beginning of this report.

## EAST AREA FUNDAMENTALS SCHOOL

The East Area Fundamentals School was offered as an alternative program beginning with the 1978-79 school year. It was located in the Andersen C school facility. The Andersen C facility also contained a modified-open alternative program.

The evaluation data for the Andersen C Fundamentals School will be reported in the following sections: students, educational program, homework, parent involvement, student progress reporting, student behavior and discipline, student achievement, and other parent/staff/student opinions about the fundamentals school.

### Students Attending The East Area Fundamentals School

When school began in the fall of 1978, 171 children were enrolled in the seven classes at the Andersen C Fundamentals School. During the school year seventy-eight students withdrew from the program and sixty-three students entered. Therefore, at the end of the school year in June 1979, 156 children were on roll (Table 1 on page 6). A total of 103 children, or 60% of the fall 1978 population, were enrolled the entire school year.

The school records indicated that the seventy-eight students who withdrew during the school year left for the following reasons:

| | |
|---|---|
| Moved out of Minneapolis | 39 |
| Transferred to another Minneapolis public school | 34 |
| Transferred to a Minneapolis non-public school | 3 |
| Reason unknown | 2 |

Three-fourths of the 195 grade 1-6 students who were enrolled at the East Area Fundamentals School during the year did not attend one of the Andersen complex schools the previous year (Table 2 on page 7). Seventeen percent attended Longfellow in 1977-78, 20% attended other East Area Schools, 21% attended schools outside Minneapolis, and 9% attended North Area schools.

#### Reasons for Enrolling

Why did parents enroll their children in the East Area Fundamentals School? The parent questionnaire listed several possible reasons for enrolling

Table 1

Student Enrollment and Withdrawals
1978-79 at the East Area Fundamentals School

| Grade | Total Enrolled In Sept. 1978 | Number of Students Who Entered During Year | Number of Students Who Withdrew During Year | Number of Students Who Were Enrolled Entire Year | Total Enrolled In June 1979 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 31 | 8 | 12 | 18 | 27 |
| 1 | 28 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 27 |
| 2 | 33 | 8 | 15 | 19 | 26 |
| 3 | 21 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 19 |
| 4 | 25 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 23 |
| 5 | 16 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 14 |
| 6 | 17 | 7 | 4 | 13 | 20 |
| Total | 171 | 63 | 78 | 103 | 156 |

Table 2

Schools Attended by East Area Fundamentals School Students in Previous Year 1977-78

(N=195)

| School Attended in 1977-78 | N | % | School Attended in 1977-78 | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andersen Complex | 47 | 24% | North Area | 17 | 9% |
| Andersen A | 22 | | Waite Park | 1 | |
| Andersen B | 15 | | Loring | 1 | |
| Andersen C | 6 | | North Star | 3 | |
| Andersen D | 1 | | Hamilton | 4 | |
| Andersen (unknown) | 3 | | Willard | 2 | |
| | | | Bremer | 1 | |
| Longfellow | 33 | 17% | Putnam | 1 | |
| | | | Bethune | 4 | |
| Other East Area | 39 | 20% | | | |
| Cooper | 7 | | West Area | 7 | 4% |
| Wilder | 13 | | | | |
| Hiawatha | 4 | | Non-Public | 3 | 2% |
| Howe | 5 | | Outside Minneapolis | 41 | 21% |
| Seward | 5 | | | | |
| Hale | 2 | | Montesorri | 3 | 2% |
| Standish | 1 | | | | |
| Bancroft | 2 | | No Information | 5 | 3% |

children in the fundamentals school. Parents were asked (a) to indicate whether or not each reason was a factor in their enrollment decision, and (b) to indicate the one most important reason for selecting the fundamentals school.

More than three-fourths of the parents said that the following expectations were reasons for choosing the fundamentals school (Table 3 on page 9):

- Expected an emphasis on reading, arithmetic, and writing (89%)
- Expected an emphasis on discipline and orderly behavior (88%)
- My child would be in a self-contained classroom with one teacher (83%)
- Expected an emphasis on citizenship and character development (77%)

Substantially less than half the responding parents said the following were reasons for enrolling their children: opportunity for parent involvement (30%), child would not have to be bused out of his/her neighborhood (11%), the only school with room for my child (17%), preferred the teacher (36%).

Most important reason. The expectation that there would be an emphasis on reading, arithmetic, and writing was given as the one most important by 59% of the parents. No other reason accounted for more than thirteen percent of the respondents.

## The Educational Program

What was the educational program for students at the Andersen C Fundamentals School? The seven classroom teachers representing grades K through 6, along with the program coordinator and the special education teacher, were interviewed to provide information about this question. The interviewer spent one or more hours with each staff member. Before the interview, each teacher was assured that all comments made during the interview would be kept strictly confidential and that no names would be mentioned in any reports that might be generated from the interview data. Teachers were also reminded and assured that it was the program and not any individuals in the program that were being evaluated. In the interviewer's opinion, all teachers were cooperative and offered frank and candid comments about their experiences in the school.

Seven of the nine staff members interviewed had been colleagues the previous year at Longfellow School while the other two had taught at Hale School. All teachers had taught at the same grade level or one grade below or above the grade they had been assigned to teach at Andersen. None of the

Table 3

Parent Reasons for Enrolling Their Child In the East Area Fundamentals School (N=67)

| Reasons for Enrollment | Was the Reason a Factor in Enrollment? Yes | No | The One Most Important Reason |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Expected there would be an opportunity for parent involvement in the school. | 30% | 70% | 0% |
| 2. Expected there would be an emphasis on reading, arithmetic, and writing. | 89 | 11 | 59 |
| 3. Expected there would be an emphasis on discipline and orderly behavior. | 88 | 13 | 12 |
| 4. My child would be in a self-contained classroom with one teacher. | 83 | 17 | 13 |
| 5. Expected there would be an emphasis on citizenship and character development. | 77 | 23 | 0 |
| 6. My child would not have to be bussed out of his/her home neighborhood. | 11 | 90 | 2 |
| 7. The fundamentals school was the only school with room for my child. | 17 | 83 | 8 |
| 8. Preferred the teachers in the fundamentals program. | 36 | 64 | 3 |
| 9. Other reasons | 28 | 72 | 3 |

fundamentals school staff, however, had chosen Andersen as their first choice of a school in which to teach. All had simply been assigned there. It is, however, important to note that several of the teachers also commented that the idea of a fundamentals school sounded appealing to them. They were not opposed to or disappointed about their assignments to Andersen.

Curriculum

All teaching staff reported that the East Area Fundamentals School did not have a special or separate policy with regard to the amount of time that was to be spent on each subject area. Generally teachers reported following the citywide guidelines and those developed by the East Area Advisory Committee. Keeping these guidelines in mind, each teacher took responsibility for developing a class schedule which would best meet the needs of the children in the classroom. Most teachers reported that they were not exactly sure how much time their colleagues spent on different subject areas and suggested that there probably was a lot of variation in the way teachers scheduled their day.

The fundamentals school staff reported that there really were no special objectives for curriculum areas outside of a general commitment to concentrate on reading and math. It was pointed out that the staff had wanted to have a special language, writing, speaking, and spelling project in the fundamentals school, but that there had been no funds available for the purchase of needed materials. Many hoped this kind of project could be incorporated into the budget for the second year. The area of spelling was of particular concern to most teachers.

The interviewer collected copies of the class schedule from each teacher, and data from these schedules is summarized for grades 1-6 in Table 4 on page 11. In regard to this table, it is important to note that the subject headings are those indicated by the teachers on their individual written schedules; they should not be considered mutually inclusive or exclusive. Because a teacher did not designate a specific time for some subjects, it does not follow that these subjects were not taught. For example, only one teacher formally scheduled a time for creative writing into her week, but three other teachers reported to the interviewer that creative writing was, in fact, a part of their regular curriculum. Spelling is another example. Where this subject is not formally noted, it is usually taught during the language arts time of the day.

All students received one hour of gym, one hour of art, and one half hour

Table 4

Classroom Hours Spent Each Week on Various Subjects and Activities at the East Area Fundamentals School

| Subject or Activity | Gr 1 | Gr 2 | Gr 3 | Gr 4 | Gr 5 | Gr 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Math | 2.5 | 2.5 | 4.75 | 3.5 | 3.75 | 6.0 |
| Reading | 9.5 | | 11.25 | 7.25 | 5.5 | 4.25 |
| Spelling | | 13.5 | a | | 1.25 | 1.0 |
| Language Arts | | | 2.75 | 3.5 | 2.0 | 0.5 |
| Social Studies | 6.5 | | | 1.0 | 5.0 | 4.0 |
| Science/Health | | 1.5 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| Handwriting | | | a | | 1.25 | 0.5 |
| Silent Reading | | 0.25 | 0.25 | | | 1.5 |
| Stories/Literature | 1.25 | 1.25 | | 2.25 | | |
| Media Center | | 0.5 | 0.75 | | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Book Reports | | | | | a | 0.5 |
| Creative Writing | | a | a | a | | 1.5 |
| Industrial Arts | a | | a | | | |
| Free Play/Study | a | a | | | | 0.5 |
| Daily Meeting | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.0 | 1.25 | | |
| Physical Education | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Art | 1.0 | 1.75 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Music | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |

[a] Time was spent on this activity, but it was not separately noted on the teacher's written schedule.

of music every week. This formal instruction took place under the direction of a specialist outside of the regular classroom. In addition, some students also had opportunities to participate in other art and music activities which were conducted by the regular classroom teacher.

All classrooms but two were scheduled to spend some time in the media center every week. The two other teachers explained that the media center did not, in their opinion, have enough staff to work regularly with their children, since so many of them needed constant and close supervision. Instead of going to the library, these teachers scheduled a regular time each week for stories and literature activities within the regular classroom.

Teacher classroom schedules reflected varying amounts of time allotted for the basic study of reading and math. Generally in every grade but sixth considerably more time was scheduled for reading than for math. The amounts of time scheduled for other subjects also varied among classrooms. For example, the fifth and sixth grade classes had more time blocked out for social studies than did the other grades.

The fundamentals school students spent the major part of the day with their regular classroom teacher. However, some students moved in and out of class in addition to the regular movement for music, art, and physical education instruction. The best readers in the first, second, third, and fourth grades went to the next grade level for their reading instruction. Many other students also left the regular classroom to receive special instruction through such programs as Title I, Basic Skills, High Potential, or PLC. Some students also received private music lessons during regular school hours, and others participated in band practice. Other special programs in the school in which children might participate included: Indian language and culture, special art and drama, Great Books, chemical dependency, and industrial arts.

The interviewer found some disagreement among staff members about the amount of time that a fundamentals school should allow for these activities during the regular school day. Everyone felt that the special programs offered important opportunities to their students, but that it was hard to integrate so many extra things into a basic skills schedule. Some teachers commented that they had so many individuals coming and going at different times that it was sometimes difficult to find a time when the whole class was assembled together. It was suggested that some effort and arrangements needed to be made to hold some of the non-academic activities before or after school. Another staff member suggested that, whenever possible, extra activities like drama should be offered

to the class as a whole. One teacher commented that the parents who worked on this issue in the fall had originally wanted only two children to be allowed out of the classroom at one time.

Parent opinions obtained by the May 1979 parent questionnaire differed regarding the amount of time students should miss regular class activities. Sixty-three percent of the responding parents said that they would like their children to participate in enrichment activities (such as drama, band, labs) even it it meant missing some regular classroom time. The other 38% of the parents did not want their children to miss their regular classroom time.

Reading and math instruction. All teachers at the fundamentals school used the Ginn 720 series for reading instruction. Standardized and other informal tests, as well as teacher observation and judgment, were the basis for grouping students for reading. Some teachers, however, noted that they had had a difficult time establishing groups this year because of the wide range of ability they found in their classrooms. One teacher reported that she had first to seventh grade reading levels represented in the class. Several others reported that they had some students, especially ones who had entered mid year, who fit into none of the established groups. Teachers worked with these students on a one-to-one basis and sometimes had other students provide assistance. For example, one teacher had one reading group with nine students, a second group with three students, and worked with the rest of her pupils on a one-to-one basis. Other teachers, however, did not indicate any problem establishing groups or integrating new students into them.

Teachers reported the use of several different texts for math instruction - Scott Forsman, Houghton Mifflin, MacMillan, and other materials. All of the teachers reported that they usually taught the daily math lessons to the whole class and then worked with individuals or small groups as needed. Because the concept and skill units changed often in math instruction, the grouping of children also changed frequently.

Creative opportunities. All teachers felt that all of their students were give some chances to be creative through the regular curriculum of art and music. The wide variety of special programs already noted provided at least some individual students with many more creative opportunities. Some teachers, however, regretted that some opportunities for certain kinds of creative activities had been very limited this year. The teachers indicated that the poor acoustics in the building made it easy for a classroom to disturb nearby rooms. As a result,

some teachers said that they were not able to have their children participate in certain activities and kinds of creative play which they had always encouraged in the past.

All teachers reported that students had some opportunity to choose activities of their own interest and choice, though some teachers again felt that these opportunities had been limited this year. For example, students were encouraged to pick projects or topics of interest in social studies, science, or language arts. Children also had opportunities to pursue their own interests at the media center. Some teachers also mentioned that students often had free time after completing assignments to engage in games and other activities of their choice.

Affective education. Teachers reported that affective education was a constant and on-going process in classrooms composed of children with greatly varying levels of skill and from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. One teacher remarked that human relations and self-awareness was her second priority after basics. Other teachers reported that affective education also took place through the discussion of social science and health topics and during morning sharing time.

## Parent Opinions About Opportunities for Student Development

How did parents feel about the amount of time that was provided for their child to develop in various academic and affective areas? About three-fourths of the parents who responded to the parent questionnaire expressed the opinion that the "right amount" of time was provided for children to develop in the following areas: reading, arithmetic, handwriting, language usage, spelling, music, and art (Table 5 on page 15). However, about 15-20% of the parents felt that not enough time was given to student development in these basic academic skill areas.

In no area did more than 31% of the parents say that not enough time was provided. About one-third of the parents responded "no-opinion" to areas such as science, social studies, individual talents and abilities, understanding of other cultures, and self-awareness, indicating perhaps a lack of information about the amount of time that was actually provided in these areas.

## Homework

One of the requirements or expectations of the Andersen C Fundamentals School was that children would have homework on a regular basis. The homework

Table 5

Parent Opinions About Amount of Time Provided for Student Development in Various Areas (N=67)

| Indicate your opinion about the amount of time that was provided for your child to develop in the following areas | Too Much | Right Amount | Not Enough | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading skills | 0% | 75% | 20% | 5% |
| Arithmetic skills | 0 | 75 | 21 | 3 |
| Handwriting skills | 2 | 80 | 14 | 5 |
| Grammar and language usage skills | 0 | 69 | 21 | 10 |
| Spelling skills | 2 | 79 | 15 | 5 |
| Creative abilities | 0 | 66 | 19 | 15 |
| Social skills | 3 | 60 | 22 | 15 |
| Citizenship skills | 2 | 58 | 20 | 20 |
| Music | 0 | 72 | 17 | 12 |
| Art | 7 | 75 | 9 | 10 |
| Science | 0 | 47 | 22 | 31 |
| Social studies | 0 | 57 | 12 | 31 |
| Individual talents and abilities | 2 | 41 | 26 | 31 |
| Understanding of other cultures | 3 | 48 | 17 | 32 |
| Self-awareness (learning about oneself) | 0 | 46 | 31 | 24 |

was to be completed and returned to the teacher with the parents' signature. When homework was assigned, as well as what kind and how much, was left up to the individual teacher. After discussing homework policy with every teacher, the interviewer found a wide range of practices with regard to actual homework assignments. In some classes, homework was assigned every night; in others only one night a week. The kindergarten class had one on-going assignment during the year - to learn one's letters. To help achieve this goal, the teacher sent home a newsletter every other week telling parents what they could work on with their children. In all other grades teachers made specific kinds of homework assignments in reading, math, or language arts. Most teachers reported that these assignments were uniformly made for the whole class. A few teachers reported that they did not expect homework from some children. These children were described as some of the ones who had come into the school late in the year, those who were constantly in and out of school, or those who seemed to be "overwhelmed" by just the regular school day itself.

Almost all teachers reported great difficulty in getting children to complete and return their homework assignments. In many classes 50% or less of the students ever returned homework tasks. Only one teacher reported that she did not have any trouble getting her pupils to do and return their homework. Some others had so much difficulty that they eventually stopped giving homework at all. They explained that it took so long to prepare and was such a struggle to collect that it did not seem worth the effort. If the children and the parents would not cooperate in the area of homework there was little the teachers felt they could do but nag and feel frustrated.

Nearly all of the teachers expressed the same kind of philosophy about homework. With the exception of reading, teachers did not see that homework served primarily a pedagogic purpose. They also did not see homework as something with which to keep students busy. On the contrary, most thought homework assignments should not be hard or long. Instead they felt homework had two other important functions. Homework offered the parents an opportunity to become involved with the education of their children. Homework also helped children develop a sense of what one teacher called "routine personal discipline." In the sense that they had to take it home, do it, and bring it back to school, homework offered children a responsibility.

Parent and Student Opinions About Homework

Ninety-six percent of the parents who returned questionnaires felt that

children of their child's age should have homework at least once a week; 55% said 1-2 days a week, 41% said 3-4 days a week. About three-fourths of the parents felt that the amount of homework their child was expected to do was "about right." Twenty-three percent said that not enough homework was expected (Table 6 on page 18).

The student questionnaire given to all children in grades 3-6 included two questions about homework. Generally, the frequency that students thought homework was assigned was similar to the frequency that they thought homework should be assigned. Fifteen percent of the students said that homework was never assigned and 13% thought that homework should not be assigned at all.

## Parent Involvement

All teachers were generally disappointed about the level of parent involvement with the East Area Fundamentals School. It had been their understanding that fundamentals schools existed because parents wanted them and chose them for their children. At Andersen C the teachers felt that they were the ones who had to try to "sell" the fundamentals program to the parents. All teachers, moreover, had the impression that many of the parents, as well as their children, had no idea what a fundamentals school was or what was required in it. Teachers did not know for sure whether or not parents of the new students understood the fundamentals school because, with the exception of a few cases, they had never met the parents of these children. Some teachers mentioned trying to call parents, but these efforts were often not successful because many parents did not have telephones. A few teachers reported that they had made home visits in some cases to try to reach parents, and that the results of these visits had been generally positive in terms of a particular child's achievement or behavior.

Teachers reported that between 40 to 75 percent of the parents in each class came to fall conferences. One teacher had had about two-thirds of her students' parents come to these conferences, but she did not think that they had been productive encounters. She explained that she never saw the consequences of what had been discussed and that in many cases she never had any further contact with the parents again. Another teacher, who also talked with many of the parents at fall conference time, reported that there had been a lot of turnover in her class and that she rarely met the parents of new students.

Each teacher reported that she had a small group of parents who had been

Table 6

Parent and Student Opinions About Homework
at the East Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grades K-6 N=67 |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | | |
| In your opinion, how often do you feel children of your child's age should have homework? | Never | 2% |
| | Less than once a week | 3 |
| | 1-2 days a week | 55 |
| | 3-5 days a week | 41 |
| How do you feel about the amount of homework your child was expected to do this year? | Too much was expected | 2 |
| | About the right amount | 75 |
| | Not enough was expected | 23 |

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students N=68 |
|---|---|---|
| Students | | |
| How many nights a week do you usually have a homework assignment from your teacher? | Zero nights | 15% |
| | 1-2 nights | 22 |
| | 3-5 nights | 63 |
| How many nights a week do you think students should have homework? | Zero nights | 13 |
| | 1-2 nights | 46 |
| | 3-5 nights | 41 |

to the classroom or to the school at times other than for fall conferences. Four teachers stated that they also had a core of from three to eight parents who volunteered to help with field trips and to organize class parties. Three other teachers said they really could not complain about the level of parent involvement with their classrooms because they had not been very aggressive in their outreach for such involvement.

When asked how they felt about opportunities for parent involvement in the school generally, teachers offered a variety of comments. Many felt the opportunities at the fundamentals school were there if parents wanted to pursue them. However, some teachers pointed out that some parents probably found it difficult to get to the school since it was not within walking distances for many. Other teachers felt that if parents came into the school they were welcomed, but that the school complex or building in itself was probably somewhat frightening or confusing. These teachers felt that more could be done to attract and make it easier for parents to come into the school. The majority of the teachers, however, felt that they had tried everything possible to get parents into the school -- parties and refreshments, educational programs, and one-to-one conferences.

Everyone noted that the Andersen Fundamentals Teachers and Parents Association had not been well attended or supported. Most teachers, however, were not the most concerned about the parents who were not able to involve themselves in the school in this way. Some teachers felt that it was not reasonable to expect parents who were probably tired from working all day to come to meetings and offer time to committees or other projects. What did concern all teachers was the lack of parental support, in many cases, for the education and discipline of their individual children. Most teachers felt there were a number of parents who did not adequately support homework, proper attendance and punctuality, and the discipline standards of the school and classroom. One teacher pointed out that it was not always the parents of new students who were not supportive. Some of the students of parents who had specifically chosen the fundamentals school were among the ones who did not always follow through on assignments and directions. Another teacher felt that some of the parents who had chosen the school had become disillusioned with it during the course of the year and that this may have been why their support apparently lessened.

Every teacher felt that the enrollment policy and practice should be addressed to help improve parent-school involvement and understanding. Almost all teachers felt that the new students and their parents were not adequately

informed about the East Area Fundamentals School's philosophy and requirements. Several teachers also felt that this lack of proper orientation was partially caused by channeling children into the fundamentals school to satisfy requirements for desegregation in the district generally and at Andersen specifically.

To make sure both parents and students understand the Andersen C Fundamentals School, teachers suggested the following procedures for enrollment. First and foremost, no children should be enrolled in the fundamentals school without being accompanied by their parents. Second, both children and parents should have the fundamentals school program explained to them fairly and thoroughly. Third, parents and children should be allowed a choice of whether or not they want to attend this kind of school. Fourth, teachers and parents should be required to meet as soon as possible after enrollment so that the teacher can gather important background information about the new students and further discuss the fundamentals school's policy as it relates to the specific classroom. Finally, the fundamentals school should have its own name and identity. Several teachers felt Andersen C School is well known throughout the city as an open school and that this confuses people when the fundamentals school is also referred to as Andersen C School.

## Parent Contacts with the School

Compared with previous years, the parents of students attending the East Area Fundamentals School did not indicate a greater number of contacts with their child's school. Thirty-six percent of the parents said that they had fewer contacts, 36% said they had the same number, and 24% said they had more contacts (Table 7 on page 21).

About half of the responding parents reported that they had two or more of the following contacts with their child's school: attendance at schoolwide events, visits to school to talk with their child's teacher, and contacts with school personnel other than the teacher.

Three-fourths of the parents indicated that they always felt welcome to contact or visit the school. Nine of ten parents said that they were satsified with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program.

## Reporting Student Progress

The East Area Fundamentals School reported student progress to parents in three regular ways. Individual parent conferences were scheduled during the

Table 7

Parent Contacts With the East Area Fundamentals School
(N=67)

| Type of Contact | Number of Contacts | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | None | One | Two More |
| Attendance at schoolwide events, such as open house, and social activities | 31% | 16% | 53% |
| Visits to school to talk with teacher about your child | 17 | 31 | 52 |
| Visits to classroom to observe | 72 | 15 | 13 |
| Visits to classroom to assist with instruction | 93 | 5 | 2 |
| Telephone conversations with teacher about your child | 49 | 22 | 29 |
| Contacts with school personnal other than your child's teacher | 16 | 31 | 53 |

| Question | Response | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Do you feel that your contacts with your child's school are welcomed by the school staff? | Yes, I always feel welcome to contact or visit the school | 75% |
| | Yes, most of the time I feel welcome | 23 |
| | No, I usually do not feel welcome to contact or visit the school | 2 |
| Compared with previous years, did you have more or fewer contacts this year with your child's school? | Fewer contacts this year | 36% |
| | About the same number of contacts this year as in previous years | 36 |
| | More contacts this year | 24 |
| | Don't know | 5 |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program? | Very satisfied | 22% |
| | Satisfied | 69 |
| | Dissatisfied | 8 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 2 |

fall, and regular report cards were sent home to parents in the winter and spring. For grades 3 through 6, students were given letter grades of A, B, C, and F to note their standing and progress in different subjects. Teachers also indicated on the report cards how students were doing in other areas of behavior and work habits. In the first and second grades, teachers did not use letter grades, but indicated whether or not a child's progress was satisfactory or needed improvement. Each teacher reported that they established their own standards for letter grades based on effort, progress, and achievement. Teachers also stated that they tried to assign children letter grades on an individual basis. There was no restriction on the number of each letter grade which might be given in each class.

In addition to report cards, the fundamentals school teachers also sent home mini-reports on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. These reports contained information about each student's tardiness, attendance, and progress on current assignments. In the first grade, folders with samples of each child's current work were sent home along with mini-reports. Students were expected to return these mini-reports and folders after they had been signed by their parents. All teachers, with the exception of one, reported that signed mini-reports were not regularly returned by 50% of the class. Though some students did not return their mini-reports, several teachers commented that they thought the children liked getting the reports so that they could see how they were doing. Another teacher also suggested that the mini-report format could be improved to make it easier for a teacher to indicate current achievement as well as the level at which a child was working. Some students improved in their work but were still functioning below grade level, and parents needed to clearly understand both things.

Parent opinions about progress reporting. Ninety-four percent of the parents who returned questionnaires said that they were satisfied with the amount of communications from school about their child's progress in school. When asked to make suggestions for improving the report card and other procedures for reporting student progress to parents, the parents made the following comments:

- Felt the bi-weekly progress reports were a good idea (8 parents)
- Progress reports did not always reach the home (2 parents)
- Expected A, B, C letter grades, not "s" for satisfactory (1 parent)
- Better explanation of test reports (2 parents)
- Would like to know right away if child is not doing work, not by written notice (1 parent)

## Student Behavior and Discipline

Before the Andersen C Fundamentals School began, a group of parents, teachers, and the principal met to discuss and develop a code of discipline. In practice, however, each teacher established her own specific standard of behavior and expectations for the children in her class. Some teachers described a well articulated system of expectations and consequences to the interviewer while others said they dealt with inappropriate behavior as it occurred and as they thought best at the time. The general standards which all teachers noted included the following:

Lunchroom
Be seated while eating.
Visit quietly.
Clear the table and area when done eating.

Hallways
Walk quietly in line when moving through the halls as a class.
Do not run in the halls.
Use a pass when moving by oneself through the halls.

Moving about in class
Sit at one's seat during class time unless given permission to do otherwise.
Ask permission to leave one's seat.
Ask permission to leave the room.

Talking in class
Talk quietly and calmly in class.
Listen to what others have to say.

In General
Address teachers and other adults by their surname.
Respect others and their property.
Come to school on time.
Come to school appropriately dressed in accordance with the dress code.

The kinds of punishments or sanctions which teachers used when students did not behave properly included:

Turn off the lights and put heads down.

Sit behind the teacher's desk.

Sit in the hall.

Lose special game privileges.

Lose part of recess.

Lose part of gym.

Do writing assignments.

Since many of the children rode the bus home and there were no late buses, it was not possible to have children stay after school as a punishment for misbehavior.

Teachers reported that they usually dealt with the discipline problems in their classes by themselves and that they did not usually/often refer students to the principal's office. When questioned about their feelings and experiences with sending children to the principal's office, teachers responded with a variety of comments. Two teachers said that they had made no referrals to the principal because they had dealt with all discipline situations themselves. One teacher explained that it was more disruptive to take a child out of class than to deal with the problem immediately. Three teachers said that they had sent children on two or more occasions to the principal and that they had been satisfied, one very satisfied, with the support and results that they had received. One teacher reported that she had not been satisfied with the results of sending a child to the principal's office. Some other teachers commented that they did not like the fact that when the prinicipal was busy or not in the building, there was no one designated to assume authority and act in her place.

Although some teachers felt that discipline was effective in certain classrooms, almost all teachers felt that the discipline policy in the school generally needed to be improved. Though a general discipline code had been established, most teachers did not think a realistic and workable method or set of procedures had been developed for the enforcement of these discipline standards. According to the official code, after three infractions, a child's parents were to be notified. But since a number of the parents could not easily be reached, this procedure was in need of alteration. Even more important, in most teachers' opinion, was the fact that no consistent set of consequences had been attached to certain kinds of misbehavior, and that this definitely needed to be done.

When asked to describe their students in terms of their responsibility for appropriate behavior, the teachers responded as follows (the percentages were combined for all classes):

| | |
|---|---|
| Always responsible, rarely or never is it necessary to remind them of their behavior | 33% |
| Usually responsible, occasionally necessary to remind them of their behavior | 21% |
| Frequently not responsible, although disruptive behavior is not severe | 21% |
| Not responsible, behavior is frequently and severely disruptive | 24% |

When asked about the amount of disruptive behavior at the fundamentals school during the year, five teachers reported constant and substantial interference

and disruption. The other two teachers reported frequent interference and disruption of learning in the school. All teachers said that this disruption came from the school in general and not from their students and classrooms. Although some students disrupted learning and some teachers spent a lot of time on student behavior problems, when the interviewer asked what caused the most interference, the response was unanimous - the school environment.

A major cause of this disruption noted by all teachers was the poor acoustics. Voices easily carried to adjacent rooms. Teachers indicated that the telephones rang too often, and that the inter-school PA system was too loud and frequently carried messages that were not relevant for the fundamentals school.

Finally, the open school located across the hall from the fundamentals school was a source of disruption. The fundamentals school teachers reported that their classes were sometimes interrupted by the sound of popcorn popping in the halls and by open school children who sometimes just popped into their rooms and yelled. In the kindergarten the situation was particularly difficult because the open and fundamentals schools shared a common play space. This space was located at the back of the fundamentals kindergarten room, and there was no wall separating it from the classroom. As a result, fundamentals school children might be working on a quiet learning task while open school children were playing within sight as well as within sound. In this way the open school did have a negative impact on the operation of the fundamentals school. Teachers also felt that it was difficult to enforce a strict standard of discipline among their students when open school children did not have to follow the same rules.

## Parent Opinions About Discipline

How did parents feel about the amount of disruptive behavior at the fundamentals school? Half of the parents who returned the questionnaire said that they did not know about the amount of disruptive behavior. Among the other half that did express an opinion, half of these parents said there was constant or frequent interference with learning, while the other half said occasional or rare interference (Table 8 on page 26). The parents tended to indicate that there was less disruptive student behavior at their child's school the previous year (1977-78) than in 1978-79.

Eighty percent of the parents said they were satisfied with the fundamentals school's discipline policy. When asked to make suggestions for changes

Table 8

Parent Opinions About Student Behavior and Discipline
at the East Area Fundamentals School
(N=67)

| Question | Response | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| What is your opinion about the amount of disruptive student behavior at the fundamentals school this year? | Constant interference with learning | 5% |
| | Frequent interference with learning | 21 |
| | Occasional interference with learning | 14 |
| | Rare interference with learning | 10 |
| | Don't know (no opinion) | 50 |
| What is your opinion about the amount of disruptive student behavior at your child's school last year (1977-78)? | Constant interference with learning | 7% |
| | Frequent interference with learning | 20 |
| | Occasional interference with learning | 23 |
| | Rare interference with learning | 34 |
| | Don't know (no opinion) | 16 |
| How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fundamentals school's discipline policy? | Very satisfied | 25% |
| | Satisfied | 54 |
| | Dissatisfied | 18 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 3 |

in the discipline policy, about one-third of the parents made suggestions. These suggestions were grouped according to similarity of content.

- Stricter discipline (4 parents)
- Contact and involve parents (3)
- Withhold activities and privileges from students (2)
- Remove students from program (2)
- Get written permission to discipline students at the beginning of the year (1)
- Incentive program for those with discipline problems (1)
- Disapproved of teacher's method of discipline (2)

Student Perceptions of Student Behavior

To what extent did negative interactions, or unpleasant incidents, occur between students at the fundamentals school? About one-fourth of the students in grade 3-6 said that they had been called a bad name or had been hit or pushed by another student "many times." About half of the students indicated that these incidents occurred "a few times" (Table 9 on page 28). Sixteen percent of the students said that they were forced by another student to hand over money or something else that belonged to them.

About half of the students reported that "many times" children in their classroom made noise or did things that bothered other students who were working. The other half were evenly split between "some, but not many times," and "little or never" (Table 9). Less than half (43%) of the students said that children obeyed the rules for behavior in the hallways and lunchroom all or most of the time.

Three-fourths of the students indicated that their classroom teacher tried hard to keep students from disturbing or bothering other students who were working.

## Student Achievement

When teachers were asked whether or not they were satisfied or dissatisfied with how much the children in their classroom had learned in reading and math this year, most teachers gave mixed responses. Only one teacher was satisfied with the progress of her class as a whole in both reading and math. Two teachers were generally dissatisfied with their classes as a whole in both

Table 9

Student Perceptions of Student Behavior at the East Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students N=68 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. So far this year, have you been called a bad name by another student? | Yes, many times | 34% |
| | Yes, a few times | 53 |
| | No, never | 13 |
| 2. So far this year, have you ever been hit or pushed by another student? | Yes, many times | 24 |
| | Yes, a few times | 59 |
| | No, never | 18 |
| 3. So far this year, have you ever been forced by another student to hand over money or something else belonging to you? | Yes, many times | 3 |
| | Yes, a few times | 13 |
| | No, never | 84 |
| 4. How often do children in your classroom make noise or do things that disturb or bother other students who are working? | Many times every day | 49 |
| | Some times every day, but not many times | 24 |
| | Little or never | 28 |
| 5. Do students in your classroom obey the rules for behavior in the hallways and lunchroom (no running, no yelling, no fooling around)? | All of the time | 15 |
| | Most of the time | 28 |
| | Some of the time | 29 |
| | Not very often | 28 |
| 6. How hard does your teacher try to keep students from disturbing or bothering other students who are working? | The teacher tries hard | 75 |
| | The teacher tries, but not hard | 19 |
| | The teacher does not try | 6 |

subject areas. One teacher commented that even with the help of a tutor and an aide it was not possible to get to everything she normally covered in a year. The other teachers said that they were satisfied with the progress of most of the students who had been in the school all year. The teachers thought that about one-third of the students in each of these classes had made a lot of progress in both subject areas, but that another third had made hardly any progress at all. One teacher said she was not really sure if some of the students who made so little progress could have learned more, since they always seemed so preoccupied or out of touch in class. Another teacher also made a similar remark about some of the members of her class.

In elaborating on their feelings and thoughts about the lack of desired progress among some of the students, the interviewer was told that a number of the children in the fundamentals school had been difficult to handle. They were not mean or violent, but very active and noisy. Many found it difficult to sit still and concentrate for any length of time. As a result, some teachers who had several of these children in their class had to spend large amounts of time working on behavior rather than instruction. Some classrooms experienced a lot of student turnover during the school year, which teachers felt also slowed down the progress of the whole class. Finally, all teachers commented on the problems posed by absenteeism and tardiness. With a number of children always in and out of school or frequently very late, there was inevitably a lot of time spent on reteaching and catching pupils up with work they had missed.

Teachers reported that they felt that the teaching staff all shared the same philosophy about the time and emphasis that should be placed on basic skills instruction. It was also pointed out by a majority of those interviewed that the teaching staff also shared the same philosophy about what a fundamentals school is and how it should operate. However, it was the opinion of many of these staff members that the administration did not share their same philosophy, and as a result, they did not feel the administration did or could be expected to adequately support them. Some but not all of the teaching staff pointed out that the administration had been chosen to lead an open school, an educational structure in many ways opposite to that of a fundamentals school. Some members of the teaching staff also felt that other Andersen support staff did not understand and, therefore, did not support their philosophy. For example, the fundamentals school expects its children to walk quietly in line through the halls and to address adults by their surnames. Some teachers described instances

when other Andersen staff did not support these and other standards among the children of the fundamentals school.

Parent Opinions of Student Progress

Generally, about 75-80% of the parents of the fundamentals school students indicated that they were satisfied with how much their child had progressed in various subject areas and work behaviors (Table 10 on page 31). The majority of these parents said they were "satisfied" rather than "very satisfied." Only a very small percentage said they were "very dissatisfied." For example, 20% of the parents said they were very satisfied, 59% said they were satisfied, 20% said dissatisfied, and 2% very dissatisfied with their child's progress in reading skills.

As mentioned previously, these results are based on a questionnaire returned by 58% of the parents. It is not known to what extent these responses represent the total group of parents.

The parents indicated somewhat greater satisfaction this year than the previous year. Sixty-three percent of the parents reported that they were satisfied with how much their child learned last year (1977-78) in the basic skills of reading and arithmetic (Table 10).

Thirty-six percent of the parents felt that the East Area Fundamentals School had a positive effect on their child's behavior or performance compared with their child's behavior/performance the previous year (Table 10). Thirty-one percent of the parents felt there was no effect (same as previous year), 24% felt that the fundamentals school had a negative effect, and 10% did not know. The following parent explanations of the positive effects were grouped according to similar content:

- Likes school better, more interested in schoolwork (7 parents)
- Improved skills, learned a lot (5)
- Studies better, does homework (3)
- More responsible for behavior (4)
- Shows greater respect for others (3)
- Better attitude about discipline and behavior at home (2)
- More outgoing, less shy (1)
- Better behavior at school (2)

The following explanations were given by the parents who indicated that their child was affected negatively by the school:

Table 10

Parent Satisfaction With Their Child's Progress
at the East Area Fundamentals School
(N=67)

| How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Are You With How Much Your Child Has Progressed This Year? | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading skills | 20% | 59% | 20% | 2% |
| Arithmetic skills | 17 | 59 | 23 | 2 |
| Grammar and language usage skills | 15 | 59 | 23 | 3 |
| Spelling skills | 21 | 62 | 13 | 3 |
| Handwriting skills | 17 | 66 | 15 | 2 |
| Social skills | 10 | 66 | 19 | 5 |
| Work habits | 25 | 55 | 17 | 3 |
| Writing (composition) skills | 15 | 60 | 23 | 2 |
| Responsibility for own behavior | 27 | 46 | 21 | 6 |
| Were you satisfied with how much your child learned last year (1977-78) in the basic skills of reading and arithmetic? | 18% | 45% | 25% | 12% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Do you feel that the atmosphere and conditions at the East Area Fundamentals School have had any negative or positive effect on your child's behavior or performance compared with what your child's behavior/performance was the previous year? | Yes, negative effect | 24% |
| | Yes, positive effect | 36 |
| | No effect, same as previous year | 31 |
| | Don't know | 10 |

- Poorer concentration because of noise (2)
- Less respect for others (2)
- General effect of environment at Andersen complex (2)
- Exposure to swearing and rough play of older children (1)
- More fighting (2)
- Developed "I don't care" attitude (1)
- Stress from problems on bus (1)

Student Opinions About Amount Learned

About two-thirds of the students in grades 3-6 thought that they learned a lot in reading and math this year. All but four of the remaining students said that they learned "some, but not a lot" (Table 11 on page 33).

Eighty-eight percent of the students indicated that they were happy with how much they learned in school this year.

Reading Achievement Test Results

How well did students at the Andersen C Fundamentals School achieve in reading during the 1978-79 school year? The results in this section are based on fall 1978 and spring 1979 administrations of the Stanford Achievement Test in Reading to students in grades 2-6. This reading test is generally accepted as a reliable measure of comprehensive reading skills. However, several cautions should be kept in mind when interrupting the results of these tests as measures of the impact of the East Area Fundamentals School on student achievement.

- Standardized achievement tests were given in reading only. Student growth in other academic skill areas - such as spelling, math, writing - was not evaluated.
- The tests used to measure reading achievement were designed to measure a broad range of skills. Some of the skills that were covered in the fundamentals school curriculum were not measured by the tests, and conversely, all skills measured by the test were not included in the curriculum.
- The only available comparison group is the test publisher's national sample of students. It is not possible to compare fall-to-spring growth with other Minneapolis students because the tests are given to other Minneapolis students only in the fall of each school year.
- The test scores and the normative scores used to interpret the test scores (national percentiles, grade equivalents) include some error in measurement. Any test score, or normative score, should be considered to be a good approximate to, but probably not equal to, the "true" score.

Table 11

Student Opinions of How Much They Learned
at the East Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students N=68 |
|---|---|---|
| How much do you think you learned in reading this year? | A lot | 63% |
| | Some, but not a lot | 37 |
| | Little or nothing | 0 |
| How much do you think you learned in math this year? | A lot | 63 |
| | Some, but not a lot | 31 |
| | Little or nothing | 6 |
| Are you happy with how much you learned in school this year? | Yes | 88 |
| | No | 12 |

- The number of students with both a fall and spring test is small, particularly at grades 3 and 5, because student turnover during the school year was large. However, virtually all of the students who were enrolled for the entire year are included in the reading test results.

The fall and spring test results for vocabulary, reading comprehension, and word study skills are given for each grade 2 through 6 in Table 12 on page 35. For readers who are not completely familiar with test score terminology, the information presented in Table 12 is defined below (grade 2 reading comprehension scores are used as an example).

- Median raw score in the fall and spring: the number of test items answered correctly by the middle-ranking fundamentals school student on that test at that grade level. The median raw score for grade 2 reading comprehension was 66.5 in the fall and 81.5 in the spring. The median raw score is relatively meaningless, particularly because different levels of the test were given in the fall and spring.
- National percentile of median raw score in the fall and spring: the percentage of pupils in the national norm group who scored lower than the middle-ranking fundamentals school student. The middle-ranking second grader scored equal to or better than 58% of the national sample of second graders who took the Primary I level in the fall, and 71% of the national sample of second graders who took the Primary II level in the spring.
- Fall-to-spring percentile change: the change in status of the middle-ranking student from fall to spring compared with the test publisher's norm group. The second graders improved 20 percentile points on the reading comprehension test. Generally a group has shown more growth from fall to spring than the national norm group if its percentile rank increases, and less growth if its percentile rank decreases.
- Grade equivalent of median raw score: the grade equivalent corresponding to the raw score of the middle-ranking student. The middle-ranking second grader's fall grade equivalent was 2.2 (or about the second month of second grade), while the spring grade equivalent was 3.7.
- Fall-to-spring grade equivalent change: the number of grade equivalent months gained, or lost, between fall and spring. The second graders gained one year and five grade equivalent months between the fall and spring testing (about an eight-month period).

Summary of grades 2-6 reading results. The following summary statements are made about the East Area Fundamentals School students' reading skills in fall 1978 and spring 1979 as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test in Reading. The reader is reminded that the number of students with both fall and spring tests is small.

1. Within each grade level, the range of student reading skills is substantial. For example, at grade 2, almost equal numbers of students scored within each of four 25-point percentile bands on the fall reading comprehension subtest (see Table 13 on page 36).

Table 12

Fall 1978 and Spring 1979 Standardized Reading Test Scores for East Area Fundamentals School Students in Grades 2 to 6

| Subtests,[a] Percentiles, and Grade Equivalents | Grade 2 N=20 | | Grade 3 N=9 | | Grade 4 N=16 | | Grade 5 N=7 | | Grade 6 N=12 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring |
| Vocabulary | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 31.0 | 26.5 | 27.0 | 25.0 | 24.5 | 26.5 | 27.0 | 21.0 | 30.0 | 33.5 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 80 | 67 | 56 | 46 | 34 | 44 | 44 | 34 | 60 | 60 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | -13 | | -10 | | +10 | | -10 | | 0 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 3.2 | 3.4 | 3.3 | 3.6 | 3.5 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 5.4 | 6.8 | 7.7 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +0.2 | | +0.3 | | +1.3 | | +0.6 | | +0.9 | |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 66.5 | 81.5 | 69.0 | 42.3 | 35.5 | 35.8 | 30.0 | 33.0 | 39.5 | 49.5 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 51 | 71 | 46 | 41 | 25 | 49 | 42 | 40 | 57 | 65 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +20 | | -5 | | +24 | | -2 | | +8 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.2 | 3.7 | 3.0 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 5.4 | 6.6 | 8.0 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.5 | | +0.6 | | +1.9 | | +0.8 | | +1.4 | |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 50.2 | 56.5 | 41.0 | 33.0 | 28.5 | 38.5 | 16.5 | 19.0 | 33.5 | 37.5 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 61 | 73 | 36 | 46 | 37 | 49 | 11 | 32 | 56 | 60 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +12 | | +10 | | +12 | | +21 | | +4 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.3 | 4.4 | 2.5 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 5.1 | 2.2 | 4.6 | 6.7 | 7.5 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +21 | | +1.2 | | +1.8 | | +2.4 | | +0.8 | |

[a]The percentiles and grade equivalents are from the test publishers' national norm groups.

The tests used at each grade level for fall and spring were as follows:

Grade 2 Fall, Stanford Primary I, Form A; Spring, Stanford Primary II, Form B
Grade 3 Fall, Stanford Primary II, Form A; Spring, Stanford Primary III, Form B
Grade 4 Fall, Stanford Primary III, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate I, Form B
Grade 5 Fall, Stanford Intermediate I, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate II, Form B
Grade 6 Fall, Gates-MacGinitie, D1; Spring, Gates-MacGinitie, D2

Reading Parts A & B were used for Reading Comprehension on Stanford Primary Levels I and II

Table 13

National Percentile Distributions of Reading Test Scores for East Area Fundamentals School Students in Fall 1978 and Spring 1979

| Subtests,[a] National Percentile Bands | Grade 2 N=20 | | Grade 3 N=9 | | Grade 4 N=16 | | Grade 5 N=7 | | Grade 6 N=12 | | Grades 2-6 N=64 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring |
| Vocabulary | No. of Students | | No. of Students | | No. of Students | | No. of Students | | No. of Students | | % of Students | |
| 0-25th %ile | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 27% | 20% |
| 26-50th %ile | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 22 |
| 51-75th %ile | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 27 | 20 |
| 76-99th %ile | 12 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 30 | 36 |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-25th %ile | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 27% | 20% |
| 26-50th %ile | 6 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 31 | 20 |
| 51-75th %ile | 4 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 20 | 27 |
| 76-99th %ile | 6 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 22 | 33 |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-25th %ile | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 28% | 20% |
| 26-50th %ile | 4 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 25 | 22 |
| 51-75th %ile | 8 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 30 | 33 |
| 76-99th %ile | 5 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 17 | 25 |

2. The reading skills of students differed substantially among the five grade levels tested. The middle-ranking second and sixth graders scored above the national norm's 50th percentile on all three reading subtests (Table 12 on page 35). On the other hand, the middle-ranking fourth grader was below the 40th percentile on all subtests.

3. At all grade levels, student gains on the reading comprehension and word study skills subtests during the eight-month period between pretest and posttest generally equaled or exceeded the expected eight-month growth of the national norm group. For example, the spring 1979 percentile rank of the middle-ranking student on the word study skills test was ten or more percentile points higher than the fall 1978 percentile rank of the middle-ranking score at grades 2 through 5. Gains on the vocabulary subtest were less than the expected growth of the national norm group at three of the five grade levels. Table 13 on page 36 also shows the growth of reading skills, particularly on reading comprehension and word study skills. In the fall of 1978, 42% of the students at grades 2-6 scored between the 50th and 99th national percentiles on reading comprehension. Sixty percent of the same students scored in the 50-99th percentile range in the spring of 1979.

## Other Opinions About the East Area Fundamentals School

The questionnaires for parents and students, and the interview of the teachers, asked the respondents to express their attitude toward several different aspects of the fundamentals school. Some of the respondent opinions were expressions of general attitudes toward the school, while other opinions were directed toward more specific aspects of the school (such as homework, discipline, student progress reporting, curriculum, student achievement, and parent involvement). Many of these opinions about specific aspects of the school were discussed in previous sections. This section will present general opinions of parents, staff, and students, and some additional more specific opinions of the students.

### General Opinions of the Parents

A majority of parents expressed favorable general attitudes toward the East Area Fundamentals School. When asked to give a letter grade to the fundamentals school, 23% of the parents gave the school an "A - Excellent," 44% gave the school a "B - Above Average," 28% gave a "C - Average, " 3% said "D - Below Average," and 2% said "F - Failure." Sixty-seven percent of the parents of students in grades K-5 indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the East Area Fundamentals School next year, 19% said that they did

not plan to enroll their child, and 15% were not sure (Table 14 on page 39).

Eighty-four percent of the parents reported that the Andersen C Fundamentals School met their expectations. Parents who said the fundamentals school did not meet their expectations gave the following explanations:

- Teachers were excellent, but conditions make it difficult to have a fundamentals program (2)
- Disappointed in high potential program (2)
- Not enough communications from school (1)
- Student was distracted a lot (1)
- School doesn't seem to care if children learn (1)
- Many parents were disinterested in program and policies (1)
- More emphasis on math and reading skills (1)
- Had hoped for a more formal classroom environment (1)
- Did not have to think much (1)

Other Student Opinions

How did students in the East Area Fundamentals School feel about the work they were required to do? What type of relationship did they have with other students and their teacher? Would they like to attend the fundamentals school next year? The opinions of grade 3-6 students at the East Area Fundamentals School are given in Table 15 on pages 40 and 41.

Since most of the questions were designed specifically for the fundamentals school study, it will, generally, not be possible to compare the responses of the fundamentals school students with any other group. Any group (such as a parent-advisory committee, or school staff members) that wants to determine, or make a judgment about, the "goodness" of the students' opinions must establish their own criteria.

Schoolwork (items 1-3, Table 15). The majority of the fundamentals school students felt that some of the work in their school was interesting and challenging, and that some was boring and not challenging. Less than ten percent of the students felt that most, or all, of the work was boring and not challenging.

The students felt that all, or most, of their class time was spent on school work (subject area assignments), rather than on things that were not school work (no assignment, fooling around). Somewhat more than half of the students said that they were given the right amount of work to do in class, while one-third said they were given too much work to do.

Table 14

Overall Parent Ratings of the East Area Fundamentals School
(N=67)

| Question | Response | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Overall, what grade do you give the Fundamentals School? | Excellent (A) | 23% |
| | Above average (B) | 44 |
| | Average (C) | 28 |
| | Below average (D) | 3 |
| | Failure (F) | 2 |
| Do you plan to enroll your child in the Andersen Fundamentals School next year? | Yes | 67%[a] |
| | No | 19 |
| | Not sure | 15 |
| Did the Andersen C Fundamentals School meet your expectations? | Yes | 84% |
| | No | 16 |

[a]Parents of sixth grade students were not included in these figures.

Table 15

Student Opinions About School, Teachers, and Schoolwork
at the East Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students N=68 |
|---|---|---|
| Schoolwork | | |
| 1. Was the work in your school interesting or boring? | Most, or all, of the work was interesting | 28% |
| | Some of the work was interesting, some was boring | 65 |
| | Most, or all, of the work was boring | 7 |
| 2. How much time does your class spend on school work (reading, math, art, and other assignments), and how much time is spent on things that are not school work (no assignment, fooling around, wasting time)? | All, or almost all, of our class time is spent on school work | 37 |
| | Most of class time is spent on school work, some time not on school work | 44 |
| | A lot of time on school work; also a lot of time not on school work | 19 |
| 3. How do you feel about the amount of work you are given to do in class? | I am given too much work to do | 33 |
| | I am given the right amount of work | 56 |
| | I am not given enough work | 10 |
| School-In-General | | |
| 4. Do you like school? | Yes | 71 |
| | No | 29 |
| 5. What grade would you give your school? | Excellent (A) | 38 |
| | Above average (B) | 19 |
| | Average (C) | 16 |
| | Below average (D) | 6 |
| | Failure (F) | 21 |

Table 15 (continued) Student Opinions About School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students |
|---|---|---|
| 6. Would you like to attend this school next year? | Yes | 29 |
| | No | 39 |
| | Not sure | 32 |
| Teachers | | |
| 7. Do you think your teacher is friendly toward you? | Yes | 78 |
| | No | 22 |
| 8. Do you think your teacher is interested in knowing how you think and feel about things? | Yes | 68 |
| | No | 32 |
| 9. Do you think your teacher is fair to you? | Yes | 65 |
| | No | 35 |
| 10. Do you like your teacher? | Yes | 66 |
| | No | 34 |
| 11. Do you think your teacher likes you? | Yes | 78 |
| | No | 22 |

Teacher relationships (items 7-11, Table 15). The fundamentals school students expressed mixed attitudes about their teachers. About eighty percent of the students said their teacher was friendly toward them and that they thought their teacher liked them. Two-thirds of the students said that they liked their teacher and that they thought their teacher was interested in knowing how they thought and felt about things and was fair to them.

School-In-General (items 4-6, Table 15). Seventy-one percent of the students indicated that they liked school. When asked to give the East Area Fundamentals School a grade, 38% of the students gave their school an "A - Excellent," 19% gave it a "B - Above Average," 16% a "C - Average," 6% a "D - Below Average," and 21% said "F - Failure."

Would the students like to attend the fundamentals school next year? Twenty-nine percent said, Yes, they would like to attend, 39% said they would not like to attend, and 32% were not sure.

Other Opinions of Staff Members

When teachers were asked if they would like to teach at a fundamentals school next year, only one teacher implied that this might not be her choice. All the other teachers definitely liked the fundamentals program, but many also stated that they would not choose to teach at Andersen C Fundamentals School unless certain changes were made.

Concluding comments from teacher interviews. Though all teachers commented on their disappointment concerning parent involvement with the school, these comments need some clarification. The emphasis in this report, as well as in the interviews themselves, has been on parents who were unsupportive in different ways. It should be noted that teachers mentioned that there were also a number of parents who were supportive of the school and the teachers in a variety of ways. Though teachers felt that they had made an extended and sincere effort to reach parents, some reflected that perhaps they gave up too soon and that they could develop better strategies in the future. Also, teachers were most concerned about only one of the three possible ways in which parents could become involved with the school. Parents could become active in the school as a whole by participating in school organizations, serving on committees, etc. Parents could also become involved in actual classroom activities. Finally, parents could contribute to the school by actively supporting at home their children's individual educational goals and the school's behavioral standards. It was in

this third area that teachers were most disappointed with some, though again not all, parents. The teachers hoped that a parent liaison position might be funded in the future to help with outreach to parents.

Though all teachers felt that the open school had some negative impact on the operation of the fundamentals school, they did not feel that the situation was hopeless. Teachers felt that they could even overcome the negative effect of the different standards of behavior at the two schools, if they could do something about insulating their classrooms from outside noise and distractions. Aside from the acoustics and the lack of secure storage space, several teachers noted things they liked about the Andersen building.

Though some teachers were disappointed about the amount of time they had to spend on behavior and discipline, and all teachers were disappointed about the lack of consistent discipline enforcement procedures generally within the school, they felt that many of the problems could not have been anticipated. Now that the problems were known, the teachers felt a workable plan for managing behavior and dealing with discipline could be developed based on the first year experience. Teachers also noted that the school needed to develop strategies and procedures for reducing absenteeism and tardiness.

In summary, it is clear that, as far as the teachers were concerned, the fundamentals school did not function as well as it should have this year. But, with the support of the administration, the staff felt that they might be able to build on what had been learned during the first year to make the fundamentals school successful in the future.

## WEST AREA FUNDAMENTALS SCHOOL

The West Area Fundamentals School at Barton completed its second year of operation in 1978-79. The first-year evaluation report describes the philosophy of the school and the operation of its instructional program.[2] Some changes in program operation may have occurred during the second year, but were not included in the second year evaluation plan. A summary of the first-year evaluation can be found in the appendix on page 85.

The second-year evaluation results are presented in five sections: parent involvement, educational program, student behavior and discipline, student achievement, and general parent opinions.

### Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in the school program and good communication channels between the home and the school continued to be high priority goals during the second year of the West Area Fundamentals School. Both parents and teachers were asked to indicate how they felt about the amount and quality of parent-staff contacts. Parents opinions about parent involvement and home-school communications were collected by questionnaires, which were returned by 87% of the parents. Teacher surveys were completed by eleven of the twelve classroom teachers.

Almost all of the responding parents indicated that they had attended at least one schoolwide event, such as open house, and also, that they had visited the school at least once to talk with the teacher about their child (Table 17 on page 46). Sixty percent of the parents indicated that they also had telephone conversations with their child's teacher. About one-fourth of the parents had visited the classroom to observe, although only a small percentage said that they assisted with instruction.

Most of the parents (85%) said that they always felt welcome to contact or visit the school. Overall, 47% of the parents indicated that they were "very satisfied"

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[2] Lary Johnson. An Evaluation of the Minneapolis Public Schools' North and West Area Fundamentals Schools, Minneapolis Public Schools, September 1978.

Table 17

Parent Contacts With the West Area Fundamentals School

(1977-78, N=214; 1978-79, N=235)

| Type of Contract | School Year | Number of Contacts | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | None | One | Two or More |
| Attendance at schoolwide events, such as open house, and social activities. | 1977-78 | 4% | 12% | 84% |
| | 1978-79 | 3 | 22 | 75 |
| Visits to school to talk with teacher about your child. | 1977-78 | 3 | 33 | 64 |
| | 1978-79 | 4 | 37 | 59 |
| Visits to classroom to observe. | 1977-78 | 54 | 32 | 14 |
| | 1978-79 | 73 | 20 | 7 |
| Visits to classroom to assist with instruction. | 1977-78 | 92 | 5 | 2 |
| | 1978-79 | 94 | 4 | 2 |
| Telephone conversations with teacher about your child. | 1977-78 | 39 | 25 | 36 |
| | 1978-79 | 41 | 23 | 36 |
| Attended Academic Philosophy Advisory Meeting. | 1977-78 | - | - | - |
| | 1978-79 | 62 | 15 | 23 |

| Question | Response | 1977-78 | 1978-79 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do you feel that your contacts with your child's school are welcomed by the school staff? | Yes, I always feel welcome to contact or visit the school | 86% | 85% |
| | Yes, most of the time I feel welcome | 12 | 13 |
| | No, I usually do not feel welcome to contact or visit the school | 1 | 2 |
| If you seek change in the academic or the philosophy of this school, did you know that the monthly Academic Philosophy Advisory meeting is the place to go to discuss such changes? | I am aware of the monthly Advisory meetings, and I think they <u>have been</u> useful. | - | 88% |
| | I am aware of the monthly Advisory meetings, but I think they <u>have not been</u> useful. | - | 8 |
| | I am not aware of the Advisory meetings. | - | 4 |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the amount of communications from school about your child's progress in school? | Very satisfied | 46% | 47% |
| | Satisfied | 49 | 48 |
| | Dissatisfied | 5 | 4 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 1 | 0 |

with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program, 48% said they were "satisfied," and 4% expressed dissatisfaction.

Parent opinions about parent involvement in the school after the 1978-79 school year were generally similar to opinions expressed after the first year (1977-78). The parents indicated somewhat fewer contacts with the school during the second year than during the first year. However, the only substantial difference was the number of parents who visited the classroom to observe (Table 17).

Eighty-eight percent of the parents said that they were aware of the monthly Academic Philosophy Advisory meetings and that they thought the meetings had been useful.

Teacher Opinions About Parent Involvement

Compared with the previous year, seven of the eleven teachers said that they had about the same number of contacts with parents in 1978-79. Two teachers said they had more contacts and two said they had fewer contacts.

Five of the eleven classroom teachers indicated that they were "satisfied," and the other six indicated they were "dissatisfied" with the amount of support that parents have given the fundamentals school program. Teachers gave the following suggestions for improving school/parent communications or parent involvement in the educational program:

- More parents involved in regular meetings
- Require attendance at two A.P.A. meetings or two days volunteer work for school
- Help parent volunteers see what and where they could fit into the program
- Pick up parents who live out of the neighborhood so they can attend parent/teacher meetings
- Children of parents who are not willing to support the philosophy may not be good fundamentals program candidates
- Many parents are active supporters, but many do nothing to promote school or to help out
- Generate more positive spirit within the school (3 teachers)

## Educational Program

The second-year evaluation did not use many resources to describe or evaluate specific aspects of the West Area Fundamentals School's educational program. Parents and teachers were asked a few questions about homework, character education, and instructional philosophy.

Teachers were asked whether they felt that the teaching staff shared the same philosophy about the amount of time and emphasis that should be placed on teaching basic academic skills. Nine of the eleven teachers who completed the questionnaire felt that most, but not all, of the staff shared the same philosophy about basic skills.

| Response | Number of Teachers |
|---|---|
| All of staff shares the same philosophy | 1 |
| Most of staff shares the same philosophy | 9 |
| Substantial number do not share same philosophy | 1 |

When asked to describe the differences that occurred among teachers, the most frequently cited difference was that a few teachers (1 to 3) did not have "fundamental" philosophies. The more specific differences that were mentioned were: homework, discipline, grading, emphasis on science and social studies, and "open-ness." Several teachers felt that one or more of their colleagues favored a more open school philosophy.

The most common suggestion for changing staff to meet the needs of students was to select staff who agree with the fundamentals school philosophy and to transfer staff who do not agree with the philosophy to other buildings.

Homework

The West Area Fundamentals School handbook stated that "homework will be assigned as an extension of class work and for enrichment." Five teachers reported that they assigned homework 4-5 days each week, five teachers said 2-3 days each week, and one teacher said one day each week. Six teachers said that 95% or more of their students usually completed their homework assignments. The other five teachers said 85% usually returned their homework.

Parent opinions about homework. Almost all parents felt that children of their child's age should be given homework at least once a week; one-third of the parents felt that children should have homework 3-5 times a week (Table 18 on page 49). More than three-fourths of the parents felt that the amount of homework their child was expected to do this year was "about right." Twelve percent of the parents said that too much homework was expected. Parent opinions about homework were similar in both 1977-78 and 1978-79.

Table 18

Parent Opinions About Homework and Discipline
at The West Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | 1977-78 N=214 | 1978-79 N=235 |
|---|---|---|---|
| In your opinion, how often do you feel children of your child's age should have homework? | 3-5 days a week | 36% | 36% |
| | 1-2 days a week | 61 | 61 |
| | Less than once a week | 2 | 3 |
| | Never | 1 | 0 |
| How do you feel about the amount of homework your child was expected to do this year? | Too much was expected | 15% | 12% |
| | About the right amount | 79 | 82 |
| | Not enough was expected | 6 | 6 |
| What is your opinion about the amount of disruptive behavior at the fundamentals school this year? | Constant interference with learning | 0% | 1% |
| | Frequent interference with learning | 1 | 3 |
| | Occasional interference with learning | 12 | 27 |
| | Rare interference with learning | 48 | 37 |
| | Don't Know (no opinion) | 39 | 32 |
| How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fundamental school's discipline policy? | Very satisfied | 44% | 48% |
| | Satisfied | 53 | 46 |
| | Dissatisfied | 3 | 3 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 1 | 2 |

## Character Education

The West Area Fundamentals School statement of philosophy indicated that the "school shall emphasize mutual respect to and for others, courtesy, manners, citizenship, and high ethical standards." The teachers were asked on the questionnaire to indicate the amount of time they spent each week on "character education" in their class. Several teachers said it was an on-going process, while others said they spent from 15-60 minutes each week on character education. The teachers also indicated that no guidelines exist for character education instruction, and that they used their own units or did their own thing.

Several teachers suggested the need for uniformity and a curriculum guide that identifies objectives and corresponding instructional activities. Six teachers expressed satisfaction and four expressed dissatisfaction with the present character education program.

## Student Behavior and Discipline

How did parents and staff members perceive the amount of disruptive student behavior at the fundamentals school? Only four percent of the parents said student behavior was a "constant" or a "frequent" interference with learning. Twenty-seven percent of the parents thought that disruptive behavior "occasionally" interfered with learning, 37% thought that the interference was "rare," and 32% did not know (Table 18 on page 49). A somewhat greater percentage of the 1978-79 parents felt that student behavior interfered with learning than did the 1977-78 school-year parents.

Classroom teachers indicated that student behavior was more disruptive to learning in 1978-79 than in 1977-78. In 1977-78, seven of the eleven classroom teachers said that interference with learning was "rare," while only one of eleven teachers said interference was rare in 1978-79. Five of the other ten teachers indicated that student disruptive behavior "frequently" interfered with learning and five said the interference was "occasionally." None of the teachers said that interference was frequent during the first year of the fundamentals school.

Six of the 1978-79 teachers felt that there was more disruptive student behavior at the school in 1978-79 than in 1977-78. Several teachers commented that part of the increased disruptive behavior was caused by students new to the school who came from school environments that permitted more "open" behavior.

Ninety-seven percent of the parents and ten of eleven classroom teachers

indicated that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the fundamentals school's discipline policy. The most common suggestion made by teachers to change the discipline policy was to more strongly enforce the existing policy. Several teachers reported that a new discipline policy that was implemented in the second half of the school year was good and that greater efforts should be made to enforce the adequate guidelines of the policy.

## Student Achievement

How well did students at the West Area Fundamentals School achieve in basic skills during the 1978-79 school year? As described in greater detail in an earlier section of this report (see pages 2, 3), student were pretested in the fall of 1978 and posttested in the spring of 1979 on the Stanford Achievement Test in Reading (grades 2-6) and on the SRA Mathematics Test (grades 3, 6).

### Interpretation Cautions

The results reported in this section are based on achievement tests that have been validated and standardized on a national sample of students. The tests are generally accepted as reliable measures of comprehensive reading and mathematics skills. However, several cautions should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of these tests as measures of the impact of the West Area Fundamentals School on student achievement.

- Standardized tests were given in reading and mathematics, only. Student growth in other academic skill areas - such as spelling, grammar, and writing - was not evaluated.
- The tests used to measure reading and mathematics achievement were designed to measure a broad range of skills. Some of the skills that were covered in the fundamentals school curriculum were not measured by the tests, and, conversely, all skills measured by the test were not included in the curriculum.
- The only available comparison group is the test publisher's national sample of students. It is not possible to compare fall-to-spring growth with other Minneapolis students because the tests are given to other Minneapolis students only once each school year.
- The test scores and the normative scores used to interpret the test scores (national percentiles, grade equivalents) include some error in measurement. Any test score, or normative score, should be considered to be a good approximate to, but probably not equal to, the "true" score.

### Reading Achievement

The fall and spring test results for vocabulary, reading comprehension, and

word study skills are given for each grade 2 through 6 in Table 19 on page 53. For readers who are not completely familiar with test score terminology, the information presented in Table 9 is defined below (grade 4 vocabulary scores are used as an example).

- Median raw score in the fall and spring: the number of test items answered correctly by the middle-ranking student on that test at that grade level. The median raw score for grade 4 vocabulary was 32.6 in the fall and 33.4 in the spring. The median raw score is relatively meaningless, particularly because different levels of the test were given in the fall and spring.
- National percentile of median raw score in the fall and spring: the percentage of pupils in the national norm group who scored lower than the middle-ranking student. The middle-ranking fourth grader scored equal to or better than 66% of the national sample of fourth graders who took the Primary III level in the fall, and 70% of the national sample of fourth graders who took the Intermediate I level in the spring.
- Fall-to-spring percentile change: the change in status of the middle-ranking student from fall to spring compared with the test publisher's norm groups. The fourth graders improved four percentile points on the vocabulary test. Generally, a group has shown more growth from fall to spring than the national norm group if their percentile rank increases, and less growth if their percentile rank decreases.
- Grade equivalent of median raw score: the grade equivalent corresponding to the raw median score of the middle-ranking student. The middle-ranking fourth grader's fall grade equivalent was 4.8 (or about the eighth month of fourth grade), while the spring grade equivalent was 5.7.
- Fall-to-spring grade equivalent change: the number of grade equivalent months gained, or lost, between fall and spring. The fourth graders gained nine grade equivalent months between the fall and spring testing (about an eight-month period). Ten grade equivalent months is equal to one year.

Summary of grade 2-6 reading results. The following summary statements are made about the West Area Fundamentals School students' reading skills in fall 1978 and spring 1979.

1. At all grade levels tested in the fall, the middle-ranking student scored higher then the median score obtained by the national norm group on all reading tests (Table 19 on page 52). In fact, the middle-ranking student scored at or above the 62nd percentile on thirteen of the fifteen grade-test combinations.
2. Between fall and spring, the fundamentals school students tended to progress at least as well as, or better than, the national norm group. The grade equivalent gains during the eight-month period between pretest and posttest equaled or exceeded the expected eight-month growth of the national norm group on thirteen of the fifteen grade-test combinations. The spring 1979 national percentiles were higher than the fall 1978 percentiles on twelve tests.

First grade reading scores. Fall to spring comparisons at the first grade were not possible because comparable tests were not given in the fall and spring.

Table 19

Fall 1978 and Spring 1979 Standardized Reading Test Scores for West Area Fundamentals School Students in Grades 2 to 6

| Subtests,[a] Percentiles, and Grade Equivalents | Grade 2 N=42 | | Grade 3 N=54 | | Grade 4 N=67 | | Grade 5 N=46 | | Grade 6 N=43 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring |
| Vocabulary | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 30.3 | 28.3 | 29.0 | 31.3 | 32.6 | 33.4 | 36.8 | 29.5 | 32.6 | 36.3 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 77 | 78 | 68 | 73 | 66 | 70 | 76 | 66 | 69 | 71 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +1 | | +5 | | +4 | | -10 | | +2 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 3.1 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 6.3 | 6.8 | 7.4 | 8.2 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +0.8 | | +0.8 | | +0.9 | | +0.5 | | +0.8 | |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 76.5 | 81.5 | 83.8 | 54.7 | 54.8 | 42.0 | 42.5 | 43.8 | 48.0 | 51.0 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 65 | 71 | 74 | 69 | 62 | 66 | 69 | 70 | 74 | 70 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +6 | | -5 | | +4 | | +1 | | -4 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.5 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 5.7 | 6.1 | 6.9 | 7.7 | 8.6 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.2 | | +1.4 | | +1.2 | | +0.8 | | +0.9 | |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 49.5 | 52.5 | 55.5 | 43.5 | 35.4 | 42.0 | 45.3 | 37.8 | 37.8 | 40.8 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 58 | 63 | 68 | 69 | 51 | 60 | 69 | 70 | 67 | 70 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +5 | | +1 | | +9 | | +1 | | +3 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.3 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 5.6 | 4.1 | 5.7 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 8.3 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.4 | | +1.7 | | +1.6 | | +1.2 | | +0.7 | |

[a]The percentiles and grade equivalents are from the test publishers' national norm groups.

The tests used at each grade level for fall and spring were as follows:

Grade 2 Fall, Stanford Primary I, Form A; Spring, Stanford Primary II, Form B

Grade 3 Fall, Stanford Primary II, Form A; Spring, Stanford Primary III, Form B

Grade 4 Fall, Stanford Primary III, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate I, Form B

Grade 5 Fall, Stanford Intermediate I, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate II, Form B

Grade 6 Fall, Stanford Intermediate II, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate II, Form B

Reading Parts A & B were used for Reading Comprehension on Stanford Primary Levels I and II

In the spring of 1979, the middle-ranking first grader at the West Area Fundamentals School scored above, or close to, the median of the national norm group on all three subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test in Reading, Primary Level I (Table 20 on page 55): vocabulary (65th percentile, 2.2 grade equivalent), reading comprehension (45th percentile, 1.8 grade equivalent), word study skills (62nd percentile, 2.2 grade equivalent). The distribution of reading comprehension scores is bimodal. More than one-third of the first graders scored between the 80th and 99th percentiles. Most of the remaining students scored at the 59th percentile or below.

Mathematics Achievement

Third graders and sixth graders at the fundamentals school showed some improvement on the national norms of the SRA Mathematics Test between fall 1978 and spring 1979. The fall-to-spring national percentile of the third graders' median raw score increased from 56 to 63, while the grade equivalent increased from 3.2 to 4.2 (Table 21 on page 56). The national percentile ranking of the sixth graders increased nine percentile points on the concepts test and two percentile points on the computation test.

Parent Opinions About Student Progress

Parents were asked to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their child's progress in various academic and "work-study habit" areas. About 90% of the parents expressed satisfaction with their child's progress in all areas that were listed on the parent questionnaire (Table 22 on page 57). For example, 44% of the parents said they were "very satisfied" and 49% said they were "satisfied" with how much their child progressed in reading skills.

Teacher Opinions of Basic Skills Achievement

All eleven classroom teachers who returned questionnaires expressed satisfaction with how much their students learned in the basic skill areas of reading and arithmetic.

| Level of Satisfaction | N |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 5 |
| Satisfied | 6 |
| Dissatisfied | 0 |
| Very dissatisfied | 0 |

Table 20

Spring 1979 Reading Achievement of First Graders at the West Area Fundamentals School

(N=52)

| National Percentiles | Vocabulary | | Reading Comprehension[a] | | Word Study Skills | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 0-19th %ile | 2 | 4% | 9 | 17% | 3 | 6% |
| 20-39 %ile | 8 | 15 | 13 | 25 | 13 | 25 |
| 40-59th %ile | 9 | 17 | 8 | 15 | 10 | 19 |
| 60-79th %ile | 14 | 27 | 4 | 8 | 10 | 19 |
| 80-99th %ile | 19 | 37 | 18 | 35 | 16 | 31 |
| Median Raw Score | 26.8 | | 55.5 | | 49.5 | |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 65 | | 45 | | 62 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.2 | | 1.8 | | 2.2 | |

[a] Reading Comprehension is Reading Parts A & B of Primary Level I, Stanford Reading Test.

Table 21

Fall 1978 and Spring 1979 SRA Math Scores for West Area Fundamentals School Students in Grade 3 and 6

| | Grade 3 N=50 | | Grade 6 Concepts N=44 | | Grade 6 Computations N=44 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring |
| Median Raw Score | 32.9 | 43.9 | 19.0 | 24.0 | 22.0 | 27.1 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 56 | 63 | 49 | 58 | 61 | 63 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +7 | | +9 | | +2 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 3.2 | 4.2 | 6.2 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 7.8 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.0 | | +1.0 | | +1.2 | |
| National Percentile | | | | | | |
| 0-19 %ile | 10% | 10% | 11% | 9% | 7% | 9% |
| 20-39 %ile | 16 | 10 | 25 | 16 | 14 | 14 |
| 40-59 %ile | 22 | 18 | 36 | 18 | 23 | 25 |
| 60-79 %ile | 38 | 30 | 14 | 30 | 41 | 11 |
| 80-99 %ile | 14 | 32 | 14 | 27 | 16 | 41 |

Table 22

Parent Satisfaction With Their Child's Progress in Various Areas At The West Area Fundamentals School

(N=235)

| How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Are You With How Much Your Child Has Progressed This Year? | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading Skills | 44% | 49% | 6% | 1% |
| Arithmetic Skills | 44 | 47 | 9 | 0 |
| Grammar and Language usage Skills | 36 | 60 | 3 | 1 |
| Social Skills | 37 | 56 | 6 | 1 |
| Spelling Skills | 48 | 46 | 5 | 1 |
| Work habits | 41 | 48 | 10 | 1 |
| Handwriting Skills | 43 | 44 | 13 | 0 |
| Responsibility for own behavior | 47 | 46 | 6 | 1 |
| Writing (composition) Skills | 35 | 51 | 11 | 3 |

Two-Year Student Achievement Gains

More than eighty percent of the 1978-79 students in grades 3-6 have attended the fundamentals school for two years. Stanford Reading Test scores are available for these students at four points in time during this two-year period: fall 1977, spring 1978, fall 1978, and spring 1979. How much did these students improve in reading skills during this two-year period? Table 23 on page 59 shows the median raw score for each test for each grade level with the corresponding national percentile ranking and grade equivalent.

Overall, the West Area Fundamentals School students maintained, or improved, their standing when compared with the national norm group. The changes in percentile ranking from fall 1977 to spring 1979 are summarized below:

| | Gr. 3 | Gr. 4 | Gr. 5 | Gr. 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocabulary | -1 | -4 | 0 | +16 |
| Reading Comprehension | +10 | +3 | +13 | +8 |
| Word Study Skills | 0 | +13 | +18 | 0 |

Distribution of fall and spring percentiles. Table 24 on page 60 shows a distribution of national percentiles for each test for each grade level for fall 1977 and spring 1979. The overall gains made by the fundamentals school students are indicated in this table, also. In the fall of 1977, 75% or more of the students scored above the 50th percentile on four of the twelve test-grade combinations. By spring 1979, 75% or more of the students scored above the 50th percentile on eight of the twelve test-grade combinations.

General Opinions of the Parents

A large majority of the parents had favorable general attitudes toward the West Area Fundamentals School. When asked to give a letter grade to the fundamentals school, 41% of the parents gave the school an "A - Excellent," 48% gave the school a "B - Above Average," 9% gave a "C - Average," and 1% said "D - Below Average." Seventy-seven percent of the parents of students in grades K-5 indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the West Area Fundamentals School next year, 20% said that they did not plan to enroll their child, and 3% were not sure. These opinions were somewhat less favorable than the opinions expressed by the parents after the first year of the fundamentals school (Table 25 on page 61).

Table 23

Two-Year Gains on the Stanford Reading Test by West Area
Fundamentals School Students in Grades 3-6

| Subtests,[a] Percentiles, and Grade Equivalents | 1978-79 Third Graders N=41 | | | | 1978-79 Fourth Graders N=48 | | | | 1978-79 Fifth Graders N=38 | | | | 1978-79 Sixth Graders N=36 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Gr. 2 77-78 | | Gr. 3 78-79 | | Gr. 2 77-78 | | Gr. 3 78-79 | | Gr. 4 77-78 | | Gr. 5 78-79 | | Gr. 5 77-78 | | Gr.6 78-79 | |
| | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 |
| Vocabulary Median Raw Score | 29.6 | 26.9 | 28.9 | 31.3 | 29.8 | 31.6 | 32.5 | 33.3 | 33.8 | 33.3 | 37.5 | 31.5 | 32.0 | 29.2 | 32.8 | 37.5 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 74 | 69 | 67 | 73 | 73 | 74 | 66 | 69 | 73 | 69 | 79 | 7[illegible] | 60 | 65 | 70 | 76 |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.9 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 4.6 | 4.0 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 5.0 | 5.7 | 6.4 | 7.1 | 5.5 | 6.7 | 7.5 | 8.4 |
| Reading Comprehension Median Raw Score | 74.0 | 75.3 | 83.7 | 54.9 | 79.0 | 57.0 | 54.3 | 41.5 | 53.2 | 49.5 | 44.5 | 44.5 | 40.5 | 40.5 | 48.8 | 52.5 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 60 | 59 | 73 | 70 | 62 | 76 | 61 | 65 | 58 | 79 | 71 | 71 | 65 | 61 | 76 | 73 |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.3 | 3.1 | 4.0 | 4.7 | 3.5 | 5.1 | 4.5 | 5.6 | 4.4 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 5.9 | 6.6 | 7.9 | 9.1 |
| Word Study Skills Median Raw Score | 50.8 | 49.8 | 54.8 | 40.4 | 49.3 | 40.9 | 40.5 | 44.8 | 36.5 | 44.2 | 47.3 | 38.5 | 45.5 | 38.5 | 38.5 | 40.5 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 63 | 56 | 66 | 63 | 55 | 64 | 62 | 68 | 53 | 66 | 75 | 71 | 69 | 71 | 69 | 69 |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.4 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 4.7 | 3.1 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 6.1 | 7.1 | 7.8 | 6.5 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 8.2 |

[a]The percentiles and grade equivalents are from the test publishers' national norm groups.

The Stanford Reading tests used at each grade level for fall and spring were as follows:

1978-79 Third Graders — F77, Primary I, Form A; S78, Primary II, Form B; F78, Primary II, Form A; S79, Primary III, Form B.

1978-7[illegible] Fourth Graders — F77, Primary II, Form A; S78, Primary III, Form B; F78, Primary III, Form A; S79, Intermediate I, Form B.

1978-79 Fifth Graders — F77, Primary III, Form A; S78, Intermediate I, Form B; F78, Intermediate I, Form A; S79, Intermediate II, Form B.

1978-79 Sixth Graders — F77, Intermediate I, Form A; S78 Intermediate II, Form B; F78, Intermediate II, Form A; S79, Intermediate II, Form B.

Reading Parts A & [illegible] were used for Reading Comprehension on Primary Level I and II.

Table 24

National Percentile Distributions of Reading Test Scores for
West Area Fundamentals School Students in Fall 1977 and Spring 1979

| Subtests,[a] National Percentile Bands | Grade 3 N=41 | | Grade 4 N=48 | | Grade 5 N=38 | | Grade 6 N=36 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall 77 | Spring 79 | Fall 77 | Spring 79 | Fall 77 | Spring 79 | Fall 77 | Spring 79 |
| Vocabulary | % of Students | | % of Students | | % of Students | | % of Students | |
| 0-25th %ile | 5% | 0% | 13% | 6% | 13% | 13% | 8% | 8% |
| 26-50th %ile | 15 | 22 | 13 | 17 | 11 | 8 | 25 | 11 |
| 51-75 %ile | 29 | 29 | 33 | 44 | 32 | 34 | 22 | 31 |
| 76-99th %ile | 51 | 49 | 42 | 33 | 45 | 45 | 44 | 50 |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | |
| 0-25 %ile | 17% | 2% | 10% | 8% | 16% | 11% | 19% | 8% |
| 26-50th %ile | 19 | 20 | 27 | 27 | 24 | 13 | 6 | 11 |
| 51-75 %ile | 37 | 34 | 23 | 25 | 26 | 34 | 42 | 31 |
| 76-99th %ile | 27 | 44 | 40 | 40 | 34 | 42 | 33 | 50 |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | |
| 0-25th %ile | 15% | 2% | 19% | 10% | 16% | 5% | 6% | 11% |
| 26-50th %ile | 27 | 29 | 38 | 29 | 26 | 26 | 22 | 11 |
| 51-75th %ile | 29 | 32 | 8 | 21 | 37 | 18 | 28 | 30 |
| 76-99th %ile | 29 | 37 | 35 | 40 | 21 | 50 | 44 | 48 |

Table 25

Overall Parent Ratings of the West Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | 1977-78 N=214 | 1978-79 N=235 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, what grade do you give the West Area Fundamentals School? | Excellent (A) | 47% | 41% |
| | Above Average (B) | 44 | 48 |
| | Average (C) | 8 | 9 |
| | Below Average (D) | 1 | 1 |
| | Failure (F) | 0 | 0 |
| Do you plan to enroll your child in the West Area Fundamentals School next year? | Yes | 89%[a] | 77% |
| | No | 9 | 20 |
| | Not sure | 2 | 3 |

[a]Parents of sixth grade students are not included in these figures.

## NORTH AREA FUNDAMENTALS SCHOOL

The North Area Fundamentals School at Cleveland completed its second year of operation in 1978-79. The first-year evaluation report includes a description of the school's philosophy and the operation of its educational program.[3] Some changes in program operation have occurred during the second year, such as extension of the program into the seventh grade, but these changes were not specifically addressed in the second-year evaluation efforts. A summary of the first-year evaluation is in the appendix on page 85.

The data collection for the second-year evaluation included a parent questionnaire returned by 89% of the parents, a staff questionnaire returned by all twelve classroom teachers in grades 1-6, a questionnaire for students in grades 3-6, and standardized reading achievement tests in the spring of 1979 to all students in grades K-6. The evaluation results are reported in five sections: parent involvement, educational program, student behavior and discipline, student achievement, and general parent and student opinions.

### Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in the school program and communication between the home and school were high priority goals of the North Area Fundamentals School. The substantial number of parent contacts with the fundamentals school that occurred in the first year (1977-78) continued in the second year. Ninety-six percent of the parents reported that they visited school at least twice to talk with the teacher about their child (Table 26 on page 64). Two-thirds of the parents also indicated that they had at least one telephone conversation with the teacher and had at least one contact with school personnel other than their child's teacher.

Almost all parents (97%) said that they were satisfied with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program and with the amount of communications from school about their child's progress in school.

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[3] Lary Johnson. An Evaluation of the Minneapolis Public Schools' North and West Area Fundamentals Schools, Minneapolis Public Schools, September 1978.

Table 26

Parent Contracts With the North Area Fundamentals School

(1977-78, N=211; 1978-79, N=274)

| Type of Contact | School Year | Number of Contacts | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | None | One | Two or More |
| Attendance at schoolwide events, such as open house, and social activities. | 1977-78 | 3% | 7% | 90% |
| | 1978-79 | 4 | 13 | 83 |
| Visits to school to talk with teacher about your child. | 1977-78 | 1 | 9 | 90 |
| | 1978-79 | 2 | 3 | 96 |
| Visits to classroom to observe. | 1977-78 | 49 | 34 | 17 |
| | 1978-79 | 63 | 23 | 15 |
| Visits to classroom to assist with instruction. | 1977-78 | 91 | 5 | 4 |
| | 1978-79 | 86 | 5 | 9 |
| Telephone Conversations with teacher about your child. | 1977-78 | 25 | 29 | 46 |
| | 1978-79 | 35 | 23 | 43 |
| Contacts with school personnel other than your child's teacher. | 1977-78 | 19 | 22 | 59 |
| | 1978-79 | 20 | 19 | 61 |

| Question | Response | 1977-78 | 1978-79 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do you feel that your contacts with your child's school are welcomed by the school staff? | Yes, I always feel welcome to contact or visit the school | 92% | 87% |
| | Yes, most of the time I feel welcome | 8 | 12 |
| | No, I usually do not feel welcome to contact or visit the school | 0 | 2 |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program? | Very satisfied | 60% | 67% |
| | Satisfied | 40% | 30% |
| | Dissatisfied | 0 | 1 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the amount of communications from school about your child's progress in school? | Very satisfied | 65% | 64% |
| | Satisfied | 35 | 33 |
| | Dissatisfied | 0 | 2 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 0 | 1 |

## Teacher Opinions About Parent Involvement

At the end of the first year of the North Area Fundamentals School, ten of twelve classroom teachers indicated that they had more contacts with parents than in previous years. From the teachers' viewpoint, the number of contacts with parents was about the same during the second year of the fundamentals school; one said fewer contacts, three said more contacts, and eight said the same amount.

Overall, nine of the twelve classroom teachers were satisfied with the amount of support that parents have given the fundamentals school; three teachers expressed dissatisfaction. When asked to make suggestions for improving school/parent communications or parent involvement, the following comments were made by teachers:

- Urge non-active parents to find another program
- My particular group was less supportive this year
- This year it was difficult to find a way to get parents interested in attending let alone actively involved
- Know individual talents of parents at beginning of the year so talents would be usable in classroom instruction
- Parents should be required to attend the fall orientation
- Strong teacher-pupil-parent communications all year

## Educational Program

Few evaluation resources were available to describe or evaluate specific aspects of the North Area Fundamentals School's educational program. Parents, students, and teachers were asked a few questions about homework, character education, and teaching philosophy.

Teachers were asked whether they felt the teaching staff shared the same philosophy about the amount of time and emphasis that should be placed on teaching basic academic skills. Seven of the twelve classroom teachers felt that all teachers shared the same philosophy, and five teachers felt that most teachers shared the same philosophy.

When asked to describe any differences among the staff, one teacher said the differences were so slight that they were inconsequential. Two other teachers said differences existed between primary and intermediate grade levels, mainly on the amount of time that should be spent on basic skills and the amount of homework.

### Homework

The North Area Fundamentals School's basic handbook stated that "homework will be a meaningful part of the school curriculum." Ten teachers reported that they

assigned homework 2-3 days each week, one teacher said 4-5 days per week, and one teacher once a week. Most teachers said that 85% or more of their students usually returned their homework, although two teachers said 75% of their students and another two teachers said 50%.

More than ninety percent of the parents felt that children of their child's age should have homework at least once a week; 27% said 3-5 days each week, 65% said 1-2 days a week, and 7% said less than once a week. No parent said never (Table 27 on page 67). Eighty-four percent of the parents said the amount of homework expected by the school was about right.

Generally, the frequency that students said homework was assigned to them was similar to the frequency that they thought homework should be assigned. However, 25% of the students indicated that homework should not be given at all, while only 3% said homework was never assigned.

| | Zero Nights | 1-2 Nights | 3-5 Nights |
|---|---|---|---|
| Should be Assigned | 25% | 58% | 17% |
| Was Assigned | 3% | 68% | 29% |

Character Education

Several of the goals of the North Area Fundamentals School could be grouped under the label character education: courtesy, responsibility, citizenship, moral and character development. In order to promote student development in these areas, a character education topic was identified each week for discussion in the classroom. Teachers indicated that they spent the following amount of time each week, on the average, on the character education topics:

20-25 minutes - 3 teachers
30 minutes - 4 teachers
50 minutes - 4 teachers
60 minutes - 1 teacher

Seven of the twelve teachers were satisfied, and five teachers were dissatisfied, with the fundamentals school's character education. The following suggestions were given for improving the program:

- Need more materials (7 teachers)
- Reduce repetition (2 teachers)
- More time needed for some topics (2)
- Weekly topic too constricting (1)

Table 27

Parent Opinions About Homework and Discipline
at The North Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | 1977-78 N-211 | 1978-79 N=274 |
|---|---|---|---|
| In your opinion, how often do you feel children of your child's age should have homework? | 3-5 days a week | 35% | 27% |
| | 1-2 days a week | 60 | 65 |
| | Less than once a week | 4 | 7 |
| | Never | 1 | 0 |
| How do you feel about the amount of homework your child was expected to do this year? | Too much was expected | 9% | 10% |
| | About the right amount | 77 | 84 |
| | Not enough was expected | 14 | 6 |
| What is your opinion about the amount of disruptive behavior at the fundamentals school this year? | Constant interference with learning | 1% | 1% |
| | Frequent interference with learning | 1 | 2 |
| | Occasional interference with learning | 11 | 22 |
| | Rare interference with learning | 61 | 46 |
| | Don't Know (no opinion) | 27 | 29 |
| How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fundamental school's discipline policy? | Very satisfied | 65% | 60% |
| | Satisfied | 35 | 39 |
| | Dissatisfied | 0 | 1 |
| | Very dissatisfied | 0 | 0 |

- Difficult to explain some topics (1)
- Remove inappropriate topics (1)
- Locate people with personal experiences related to topics (1)

Eighty-nine percent of the parents expressed satisfaction with the fundamentals school's character education program. Most of the other parents indicated that they did not know enough about the program to have an opinion.

## Student Behavior and Discipline

How did parents and staff members feel about the amount of disruptive behavior at the fundamentals school? Only 3% of the parents thought that student behavior was either a "constant" or a "frequent" interference with learning. Twenty-two percent of the parents thought student behavior was an "occasional" interference with learning and 46% said it was a "rare" interference with learning (Table 27). These opinions were similar to parent opinions in 1977-78. However, the 1978-79 parents perceived somewhat more disruptive student behavior than did the 1977-78 parents. Ninety-nine percent of the parents were satisfied with the fundamentals school's discipline policy.

None of the classroom teachers said that student behavior either constantly or frequently interfered with learning. Nine of the teachers said disruptive

| | Number of Teachers | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1977-78 | 1978-79 |
| Constant Interference | 0 | 0 |
| Frequent Interference | 0 | 0 |
| Occasional Interference | 5 | 9 |
| Rare Interference | 7 | 3 |

behavior was an occasional interference to learning. Although more teachers in 1978-79 than in 1977-78 indicated an occasional interference with learning, eight of the twelve teachers said that in the second year the amount of disruptive behavior was the same as the previous year, three teachers said it was less disruptive, and one said more disruptive.

All teachers indicated that they were either very satisfied (6 teachers) or satisfied (6 teachers) with the fundamentals school's discipline policy. No teacher suggested a change in the discipline policy.

### Student Perceptions of Student Behavior

Several items on the student questionnaire referred to student behavior in the

fundamentals school. To what extent did negative student interactions, or unpleasant incidents between students, occur at the North Area Fundamentals School? About 20% of the students in grades 3-6 said that they have been called a bad name and have been hit or pushed by another student "many times." About half of the students said that these incidents occurred "a few times" (Table 28 on page 70). Slightly more than 10% of the students reported that they were victims of extortion, or were forced by another student to hand over money or something else that belonged to them. The frequency with which these incidents occurred was similar to the student-reported frequency the previous year.

About one-third of the students indicated that children in their classroom made noise or did things "many times every day" that bothered other students who were working. The other two-thirds said that this type of disturbance occurred some, but not many, times every day, or little or never (Table 28). About half of the students reported that students in their classroom obeyed the rules for behavior in the hallways and lunchroom "all or most of the time." Similar frequencies were reported in 1977-78.

How hard does the classroom teacher try to keep students from disturbing or bothering other students who are not working? Eighty-seven percent of the students thought that their teacher "tried hard" (Table 28).

## Student Achievement

How well did students at the North Area Fundamentals School achieve in basic skills during the 1978-79 school year? As described in greater detail in an earlier section of this report (see pages 2, 3), students were pretested in the fall of 1978 and posttested in the spring of 1979 on the Stanford Achievement Test in Reading (grades 2-6).

### Interpretation Cautions

The results reported in this section are based on achievement tests that have been validated and standardized on a national sample of students. The tests are generally accepted as reliable measures of comprehensive reading and mathematics skills. However, several cautions should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of these tests as measures of the impact of the North Area Fundamentals School on student achievement.

- Standardized achievement tests were given in reading only. Student growth in other academic skill areas - such as spelling, math, grammar, writing -

Table 28

Student Perceptions of Student Behavior at the North Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students 1977-78 N=190 | Grade 3-6 Students 1978-79 N=224 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. So far this year, have you been called a bad name by another student? | Yes, many times | 18% | 22% |
| | Yes, a few times | 55 | 58 |
| | No, never | 27 | 21 |
| 2. So far this year, have you ever been hit or pushed by another student? | Yes, many times | 19 | 16 |
| | Yes, a few times | 57 | 57 |
| | No, never | 24 | 27 |
| 3. So far this year, have you ever been forced by another student to hand over money or something else belonging to you? | Yes, many times | 3 | 1 |
| | Yes, a few times | 10 | 12 |
| | No, never | 87 | 87 |
| 4. How often do children in your classroom make noise or do things that disturb or bother other students who are working? | Many times every day | 36 | 39 |
| | Some times every day, but not many times | 53 | 51 |
| | Little or never | 11 | 10 |
| 5. Do students in your classroom obey the rules for behavior in the hallways and lunchroom (no running, no yelling, no fooling around)? | All of the time | 7 | 7 |
| | Most of the time | 52 | 44 |
| | Some of the time | 23 | 32 |
| | Not very often | 18 | 17 |
| 6. How hard does your teacher try to keep students from disturbing or bothering other students who are working? | The teacher tries hard | 86 | 87 |
| | The teacher tries, but not hard | 12 | 12 |
| | The teacher does not try | 2 | 2 |

was not evaluated.

- The tests used to measure reading achievement were designed to measure a broad range of skills. Some of the skills that were covered in the fundamentals school curriculum were not measured by the tests, and, conversely, all skills measured by the test were not included in the curriculum.
- The only available comparison group is the test publisher's national sample of students. It is not possible to compare fall-to-spring growth with other Minneapolis students because the tests are given to other Minneapolis students only once each school year.
- The test scores and the normative scores used to interpret the test scores (national percentiles, grade equivalents) include some error in measurement. Any test score, or normative score, should be considered to be a good approximate to, but probably not equal to, the "true" score.

Reading Achievement

The fall and spring test results for vocabulary, reading comprehension, and word study skills are given for each grade 2 through 6 in Table 29 on page 72. For readers who are not completely familiar with test score terminology, the information presented in Table 29 is defined below (grade 4 vocabulary scores are used as an example).

- Median raw score in the fall and spring: the number of test items answered correctly by the middle-ranking student on that test at that grade level. The median raw score for grade 4 vocabulary was 31.0 in the fall and 31.3 in the spring. The median raw score is relatively meaningless, particularly because different levels of the test were given in the fall and spring.
- National percentile of median raw score in the fall and spring: the percentage of pupils in the national norm group who scored lower than the middle-ranking student. The middle-ranking fourth grader scored equal to or better than 60% of the national sample of fourth graders who took the Primary III level in the fall, and 63% of the national sample of fourth graders who took the Intermediate I level in the spring.
- Fall-to-spring percentile change: the change in status of the middle-ranking student from fall to spring compared with the test publisher's norm groups. The fourth graders improved three percentile points on the vocabulary test. Generally, a group has shown more growth from fall to spring than the national norm group if their percentile rank increases, and less growth if their percentile rank decreases.
- Grade equivalent of median raw score: the grade equivalent corresponding to the raw score of the middle-ranking student. The middle-ranking fourth grader's fall grade equivalent was 4.6 (or about the sixth month of fourth grade), while the spring grade equivalent was 5.4 (or about the fourth month of the fifth grade).
- Fall-to-spring grade equivalent change: the number of grade equivalent months gained, or lost, between fall and spring. The fourth graders gained eight grade equivalent months between the fall and spring testing (about an eight-month period). Ten grade equivalent months is equal to one year.

Table 29

Fall 1978 and Spring 1979 Standardized Reading Test Scores for North Area Fundamentals School Students in Grades 2 to 6

| Subtests,[a] Percentiles, and Grade Equivalents | Grade 2 N=48 | | Grade 3 N=52 | | Grade 4 N=57 | | Grade 5 N=55 | | Grade 6 N=52 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring |
| Vocabulary | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 28.5 | 27.8 | 27.1 | 28.1 | 31.0 | 31.3 | 31.3 | 26.9 | 29.5 | 33.8 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 67 | 75 | 57 | 59 | 60 | 63 | 58 | 58 | 58 | 61 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +8 | | +2 | | +3 | | 0 | | +3 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.6 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 6.3 | 6.8 | 7.8 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.1 | | +0.8 | | +0.8 | | +0.9 | | +1.0 | |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 77.5 | 84.0 | 80.5 | 54.2 | 51.3 | 41.9 | 42.4 | 46.8 | 43.8 | 52.2 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 67 | 78 | 65 | 68 | 55 | 66 | 68 | 76 | 66 | 72 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | +11 | | +3 | | +11 | | +8 | | +6 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.6 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 5.7 | 6.1 | 7.6 | 7.1 | 9.0 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.3 | | +0.8 | | +1.5 | | +1.5 | | +1.9 | |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 54.2 | 56.5 | 51.0 | 38.5 | 35.3 | 41.3 | 42.0 | 35.1 | 34.5 | 40.8 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 75 | 73 | 58 | 58 | 51 | 57 | 60 | 62 | 59 | 70 |
| Fall-to-Spring Percentile Change | -2 | | 0 | | +6 | | +2 | | +11 | |
| Grade equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.7 | 4.4 | 3.3 | 4.5 | 4.1 | 5.6 | 5.7 | 7.0 | 6.9 | 8.3 |
| Fall-to-Spring Grade Equivalent Change | +1.7 | | +1.2 | | +1.5 | | +1.3 | | +1.4 | |

[a]The percentiles and grade equivalents are from the test publishers' national norm groups.

The tests used at each grade level for fall and spring were as follows:

Grade 2 Fall, Stanford Primary I, Form A; Spring, Stanford Primary II, Form B

Grade 3 Fall, Stanford Primary II, Form A; Spring, Stanford Primary III, Form B

Grade 4 Fall, Stanford Primary III, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate I, Form B

Grade 5 Fall, Stanford Intermediate I, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate II, Form B

Grade 6 Fall, Stanford Intermediate II, Form A; Spring, Stanford Intermediate II, Form B

Reading Parts A & B were used for Reading Comprehension on Stanford Primary Levels I and II

Summary of grades 2-6 reading results. The following summary statements are made about the North Area Fundamentals School students' reading skills in fall 1978 and spring 1979 as measured by the Stanford Reading Tests.

1. The middle-ranking student scored equal to or higher than the 51st percentile on the national norms on all tests at all grade levels in the fall of 1978. The percentiles ranged from the 51st percentile for fourth graders on the word study skills test to the 75th percentile for second graders on word study skills (Table 29).
2. Between fall 1978 and spring 1979, the fundamentals school students progressed as well as, or better than, the national norm group. The grade equivalent gains during the eight-month period between pretest and posttest equaled or exceeded the expected eight months of the national norm group on all tests at all grade levels. The spring 1979 national percentiles were higher than the fall 1978 percentiles on twelve of the fifteen grade-by-test combinations.

First grade reading scores. Fall to spring comparisons were not possible at first grade because comparable tests were not given in the fall and spring. In the spring of 1979, the middle-ranking first grader at the North Area Fundamentals School scored as follows on the Stanford Reading Test, Primary Level I: vocabulary, 74th percentile, grade equivalent 2.3; reading comprehension, 54th percentile, grade equivalent 1.9; word study skills, 52nd percentile, grade equivalent 2.0 (Table 30 on page 74).

Kindergarten readiness score. In May 1979 the kindergarten children were given the 1976 edition of the Metropolitan Readiness Test, Level I. Level I concentrates on the more basic pre-reading skills and includes tests on auditory memory, rhyming, letter recognition, visual matching, school language and listening, and quantitative language. A pre-reading skills composite score is obtained by totalling the scores for the six tests.

Level I was designed for use from the beginning through the middle of kindergarten. Test publisher norms for a May testing date are not available. The distribution of national percentiles for the fundamentals school kindergarteners is shown below using the January-March national norms. It is very likely that these percentiles are an overestimate of the students' true score on the readiness skills included in this test.

| National Percentile | Fundamentals Kindergarteners | |
|---|---|---|
| | N | % |
| 76-100 | 31 | 54% |
| 51-75 | 8 | 14 |
| 26-50 | 16 | 28 |
| 1-25 | 2 | 4 |

Table 30

Spring 1979 Reading Achievement of First Graders at the North Area Fundamentals School

(N=51)

| National Percentile | Vocabulary N | Vocabulary % | Reading Comprehension[a] N | Reading Comprehension[a] % | Word Study Skills N | Word Study Skills % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0-19th %ile | 1 | 2% | 3 | 6% | 3 | 6% |
| 20-39th %ile | 6 | 12 | 13 | 25 | 12 | 24 |
| 40-59th %ile | 9 | 18 | 11 | 22 | 15 | 29 |
| 60-79th %ile | 15 | 29 | 15 | 29 | 13 | 25 |
| 80-99th %ile | 20 | 39 | 9 | 18 | 8 | 16 |
| Median Raw Score | 28.3 | | 63.0 | | 47.1 | |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 74 | | 54 | | 52 | |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.3 | | 1.9 | | 2.0 | |

[a] Reading Comprehension is Reading Parts A & B of Primary Level I, Stanford Reading Test.

## Teacher Opinions of Basic Skills Achievement

All twelve classroom teachers expressed satisfaction with how much their students learned in the basic skill areas of reading and arithmetic.

| Level of Satisfaction | N |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 3 |
| Satisfied | 9 |
| Dissatisfied | 0 |
| Very dissatisfied | 0 |

## Parent Opinions About Student Progress

Parents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their child's progress in various academic areas. Ninety percent of the parents expressed satisfaction with their child's progress in all areas that were listed on the questionnaire (Table 31 on page 76). For example, 53% of the parents were "very satisfied" and 40% were "satisfied" with how much their child progressed in reading and arithmetic.

## Student Opinions About Amount Learned

More than three-fourths of the students in grades 3-6 indicated that they learned "a lot" in reading and math this year. Almost all of the other students said that they learned "some, but not a lot" (Table 32 on page 77). Eighty-nine percent of the students were happy with how much they learned this year.

## Two-Year Student Achievement Gains

More than eighty percent of the 1978-79 students in grades 3-6 have attended the North Area Fundamentals School for two years. Stanford Reading Test scores are available for these students at four points in time during this two-year period: fall 1977, spring 1978, fall 1978, and spring 1979. What gains did these students make in reading achievement during this two-year period? Table 33 on page 78 shows the median raw score with the corresponding national percentile and grade equivalent for each test at each grade level for each of the four testing times.

Overall, the North Area Fundamentals School students maintained, or improved, their standing when compared with the national norm group. The changes in percentile ranking from fall 1977 to spring 1979 are summarized below:

Table 31

Parent Satisfaction With Their Child's Progress in Various Areas at The North Area Fundamentals School

(N=274)

| How Satisfied or Dissatisfied Are You With How Much Your Child Has Progressed This Year? | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading Skills | 53% | 40% | 5% | 1% |
| Arithmetic Skills | 53 | 40 | 7 | 1 |
| Grammar and Language Skills | 41 | 53 | 5 | 2 |
| Spelling Skills | 50 | 43 | 6 | 2 |
| Handwriting Skills | 39 | 50 | 10 | 2 |
| Writing (composition) Skills | 32 | 58 | 9 | 1 |

Table 32

Student Opinions of How Much They Learned
at the North Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students 1977-78 N=190 | Grade 3-6 Students 1978-79 N=224 |
|---|---|---|---|
| How much do you think you learned in reading this year? | A lot | 81% | 76% |
| | Some, but not a lot | 18 | 22 |
| | Little or nothing | 2 | 1 |
| How much do you think you learned in math this year? | A lot | 87 | 79 |
| | Some, but not a lot | 13 | 19 |
| | Little or nothing | 1 | 3 |
| Are you happy with how much you learned in school this year? | Yes | 94 | 89 |
| | No | 6 | 11 |

Table 33

Two-Year Gains on the Stanford Reading Test by North Area
Fundamentals School Students in Grades 3-6

| Subtests,[a] Percentiles, and Grade Equivalents | 1978-79 Third Graders N=43 | | | | 1978-79 Fourth Graders N=49 | | | | 1978-79 Fifth Graders N=43 | | | | 1978-79 Sixth Graders N=41 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Gr. 2 77-78 | | Gr. 3 78-79 | | Gr. 3 77-78 | | Gr. 4 78-79 | | Gr. 4 77-78 | | Gr. 5 78-79 | | Gr. 5 77-78 | | Gr. 6 78-79 | |
| | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 | F77 | S78 | F78 | S79 |
| Vocabulary | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 29.7 | 26.0 | 27.3 | 28.3 | 27.2 | 33.4 | 31.0 | 32.3 | 30.7 | 31.1 | 31.5 | 27.3 | 33.8 | 30.3 | 32.9 | 35.3 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 74 | 64 | 58 | 60 | 57 | 80 | 60 | 65 | 59 | 62 | 59 | 59 | 67 | 69 | 70 | 67 |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.9 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 4.2 | 3.3 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 5.6 | 4.5 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 6.8 | 7.6 | 8.0 |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 74.3 | 74.8 | 83.0 | 55.0 | 73.8 | 54.0 | 50.8 | 42.3 | 54.0 | 45.3 | 44.3 | 47.4 | 42.3 | 44.7 | 44.3 | 53.8 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 61 | 59 | 72 | 70 | 54 | 68 | 54 | 67 | 60 | 73 | 71 | 77 | 69 | 71 | 67 | 76 |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.3 | 3.1 | 3.9 | 4.7 | 3.2 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 5.7 | 4.5 | 6.1 | 6.3 | 7.6 | 6.1 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 9.5 |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Median Raw Score | 52.0 | 49.0 | 52.3 | 38.8 | 42.0 | 32.1 | 36.0 | 41.3 | 37.3 | 43.0 | 42.5 | 35.0 | 44.0 | 34.8 | 36.8 | 41.3 |
| National Percentile of Median Raw Score | 66 | 54 | 61 | 59 | 38 | 44 | 52 | 57 | 55 | 62 | 61 | 62 | 64 | 62 | 64 | 71 |
| Grade Equivalent of Median Raw Score | 2.5 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 2.5 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 5.6 | 4.4 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 7.0 | 6.1 | 7.0 | 7.4 | 8.5 |

[a]The percentiles and grade equivalents are from the test publishers' national norm groups.

The Stanford Reading tests used at each grade level for all and spring were as follows:

1978-79 Third Graders F77, Primary I, Form A; S78, Primary II, Form B; F78, Primary II, Form A; S79, Primary III, Form B.

1978-79 Fourth Graders F77, Primary II, Form A; S78, Primary III, Form B; F78, Primary III, Form A; S79, Intermediate I, Form B.

1978-79 Fifth Graders F77, Primary III, Form A; S78, Intermediate I, Form B; F78, Intermediate I, Form A; S79, Intermediate II, Form B.

1978-79 Sixth Graders F77, Intermediate I, Form A; S78, Intermediate II, Form B; F78, Intermediate II, Form A; S79, Intermediate II, Form B.

Reading Parts A & B were used for Reading Comprehension on Primary Level I and II.

| | Gr. 3 | Gr. 4 | Gr. 5 | Gr. 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocabulary | -14 | + 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Reading Comprehension | + 9 | +13 | +17 | + 7 |
| Word Study Skills | - 7 | +19 | + 7 | + 7 |

Distribution of fall and spring percentiles. Table 34 on page 80 shows a distribution of national percentiles for each test for each grade level for fall 1977 and spring 1979. The gains made in reading comprehension during the first two years of the fundamentals schools are indicated clearly. A substantially greater percentage of students scored in the 76-99th percentile band in the spring of 1979 than in the fall of 1977. Similarly, fewer students scored in the 0-25th percentile band in spring 1979.

## Other Student and Parent Opinions

A large majority of the parents had favorable general attitudes toward the North Area Fundamentals School. When asked to give a letter grade to the fundamentals school, 61% of the parents gave the school an "A - Excellent," 34% gave the school a "B - Above Average," and 5% gave it a "C - Average." Ninety-three percent of the parents of students in grades K-5 indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the North Area Fundamentals School next year, 4% said that they did not plan to enroll their child, and 3% were not sure (Table 35 on page 81). These 1978-79 enrollment ratings were slightly less favorable than the 1977-78 ratings on the same items.

### Other Student Opinions

How did students in the North Area Fundamentals School feel about the work they were required to do? Would they like to attend the fundamentals school next year? The opinions of grade 3-6 students are given in Table 36 on page 82.

- Sixty-eight percent of the respondents reported that they liked school.
- The majority of the students felt that some schoolwork was interesting and that some was boring; ten percent said that most, or all, of the work was boring.
- The students thought that all, or most, of their class time was spent on schoolwork, rather than on things that were not schoolwork (no assignments, fooling around).
- About two-thirds of the students said that they were given the right amount of work to do in class, while one-third said they were given too much work.

Table 34

National Percentile Distributions of Reading Test Scores for North Area Fundamentals School Students in Fall 1977 and Spring 1979

| Subtests,[a] National Percentile Bands | Grade 3 N=43 Fall 77 | Grade 3 N=43 Spring 79 | Grade 4 N=49 Fall 77 | Grade 4 N=49 Spring 79 | Grade 5 N=43 Fall 77 | Grade 5 N=43 Spring 79 | Grade 6 N=41 Fall 77 | Grade 6 N=41 Spring 79 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocabulary | % of Students | | % of Students | | % of Students | | % of Students | |
| 0-25th %ile | 5% | 9% | 10% | 18% | 14% | 12% | 2% | 10% |
| 26-50th %ile | 25 | 26 | 33 | 16 | 30 | 28 | 27 | 27 |
| 51-75th %ile | 19 | 28 | 24 | 29 | 23 | 40 | 27 | 22 |
| 76-99th %ile | 51 | 37 | 33 | 37 | 33 | 21 | 44 | 41 |
| Reading Comprehension | | | | | | | | |
| 0-25th %ile | 21% | 5% | 31% | 14% | 14% | 9% | 10% | 2% |
| 26-50th %ile | 16 | 23 | 16 | 25 | 28 | 16 | 14 | 24 |
| 51-75th %ile | 26 | 21 | 29 | 20 | 21 | 14 | 37 | 22 |
| 76-99th %ile | 37 | 51 | 24 | 41 | 37 | 61 | 39 | 51 |
| Word Study Skills | | | | | | | | |
| 0-25th %ile | 14% | 12% | 29% | 14% | 12% | 14% | 10% | 15% |
| 26-50th %ile | 16 | 23 | 35 | 29 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 19 |
| 51-75th %ile | [illegible] | 30 | 25 | 26 | 40 | 16 | 34 | 17 |
| 76-99th %ile | 30 | 35 | 12 | 31 | 26 | 47 | 32 | 49 |

Table 35

Overall Parent Ratings of the North Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | 1977-78 N=211 | 1978-79 N=274 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, what grade do you give the North Area Fundamentals School? | Excellent (A) | 68% | 61% |
| | Above Average (B) | 30 | 34 |
| | Average (C) | 2 | 5 |
| | Below Average (D) | 0 | 0 |
| | Failure (F) | 0 | 0 |
| Do you plan to enroll your child in the North Area Fundamentals School next year? | Yes | 97%[a] | 93% |
| | No | 2 | 4 |
| | Not Sure | 1 | 3 |

[a]Parents of sixth grade students are not included in these figures

Table 36

Student Opinions About the North Area Fundamentals School

| Question | Response | Grade 3-6 Students 1977-78 N=190 | Grade 3-6 Students 1978-79 N=224 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you like school? | Yes | 71% | 68% |
| | No | 30 | 32 |
| 2. Was the work in your school interesting or boring? | Most, or all, of the work was interesting | 29 | 28 |
| | Some of the work was interesting, some was boring | 64 | 62 |
| | Most, or all, of the work was boring | 7 | 10 |
| 3. How much time does your class spend on school work (reading, math, art, and other assignments), and how much time is spent on things that are not school work (no assignment, fooling around, wasting time)? | All, or almost all, of our class time is spent on school work | 44 | 40 |
| | Most of class time is spent on school work, some time not on school work | 46 | 52 |
| | A lot of time on school work; also a lot of time not on school work | 10 | 8 |
| 4. How do you feel about the amount of work you are given to do in class? | I am given too much work to do | 32 | 35 |
| | I am given the right amount of work | 65 | 61 |
| | I am not given enough work | 3 | 4 |
| 5. What grade would you give your school? | Excellent (A) | 47 | 42 |
| | Above average (B) | 33 | 32 |
| | Average (C) | 11 | 14 |
| | Below average (D) | 4 | 5 |
| | Failure (F) | 4 | 8 |
| 6. Would you like to attend this school next year? | Yes[a] | 65 | 59 |
| | No | 15 | 22 |
| | Not sure | 20 | 20 |

[a]Only the responses of grade 3-5 students were used in this item; responses of sixth grade students were omitted.

- The student opinions about school in 1978-79 were similar to opinions expressed by students in 1977-78.

When asked to give the North Area Fundamentals School a grade, 42% of the students gave their school an "A - Excellent," 32% gave it a "B - Above Average," 14% a "C - Average," 5% a "D - Below Average," and 8% an "F - Failure."

Fifty-nine percent of the students responded that they would like to attend the North Area Fundamentals School next year, 22% said that they would not like to attend, and 20% were not sure.

Appendix

Summary of an Evaluation
of the 1977-78
North and West Area
Fundamentals Schools

Minneapolis Public Schools

# An Evaluation of the Minneapolis Public Schools' North and West Area Fundamentals Schools

## 1977-78 SUMMARY 1977-78

Two K-6 "fundamentals" schools were established in Minneapolis in the fall of 1977. The major goals and proposed program activities were similar for the two schools: an emphasis on basic skills, responsible behavior, citizenship, respect for others; self-contained, structured classrooms; homework, letter grades, discipline, parent involvement.

The Minneapolis Public Schools' Research and Evaluation Department conducted an evaluation of the first year (1977-78) at the two schools with funds provided by the McKnight Foundation. The purpose of the evaluation was to describe the educational programs and the students who attended the schools; to determine student achievement in basic skills, amount of parent participation, and appropriateness of student behavior; and to measure parent, staff, and student opinions of the fundamentals school program.

### North Area Fundamentals School

About sixty percent of the 375 students who attended the North Area Fundamentals School (located at Cleveland School) lived in the Cleveland neighborhood, or in neighborhoods adjacent to Cleveland. Twenty-three percent of the students were members of minority racial/ethnic groups (18% black). About 40% of the students were economically eligible for free or reduced lunches. At the beginning of the school year, the achievement test scores of the fundamentals school students tended to be somewhat higher than the scores of the total Minneapolis student population, and higher than the group of students who attended Cleveland, and other desegregated schools adjacent to Cleveland, the previous year.

The majority of the parents said that the one most important reason why they enrolled their child in the fundamentals school was either an expected emphasis on reading, arithmetic, and writing (52%), or an expected emphasis on discipline and orderly behavior (28%). Twelve percent of the parents of students who walked to school said the most important reason was to avoid bussing out of their neighborhood.

All classrooms had a daily and weekly schedule of activities, with specific blocks of time set aside for subjects such as reading, language arts, and math. Although opportunities for creative expression occurred, there was no regularly scheduled time for specific creative activities or other activities that were not teacher directed. The amount of time spent each day on reading and language arts instruction ranged from 2¼ to 3 hours in the primary classrooms and from 1½ to 2¾ hours in the intermediate classes. The daily mathematics periods ranged from ½ hour at grade one to 1¼ hours in an

intermediate classroom. The average fundamentals classroom spent about one hour more time each week on both reading/language arts and mathematics instruction than did the average classroom in a previous survey of other Minneapolis schools.

Eighty percent or more of the teachers and a large majority of the parents felt that the "right amount" of time was provided for children to develop in the following areas: reading, arithmetic, handwriting, grammar and language usage, spelling, social skills, citizenship, and music. A substantial percentage of the teachers did not feel that enough time was spent on creative abilities, art, and understanding of other cultures.

About two-thirds of the parents indicated that they had more contacts with the school this year than in previous years. Ninety-two percent of the parents said that they always felt welcome to contact or visit the school.

Nine of the 11 teachers in grades 1-6 assigned homework regularly, usually two or three times a week. About three-fourths of the parents felt the amount of homework that was given was "about right."

Report cards with letter grades were sent home four times during the year, and all parents had two conferences with their child's teacher. Procedures for determining letter grades varied considerably among the teachers. All parents said that they were satisfied with the amount of communications from school about their child's progress. Eighty-nine percent of the students in grades 3-6 reported that they liked getting letter grades.

How did parents and staff members feel about the amount of disruptive behavior at the fundamentals school? None of the classroom teachers, and only 2% of the parents, thought that student behavior was either a "constant" or "frequent" interference with learning. The majority of the teachers (50%) and the parents (61%) thought that student behavior was a "rare" interference with learning. Both teachers and parents thought that there was less disruptive behavior this year than in the previous year. All staff members and parents indicated that they were satisfied with the discipline policy at the North Area Fundamentals School.

Students indicated that negative student interactions did occur at the school. For example, 20% of the students in grades 3-6 said they have been called a bad name and have been hit or pushed by another student "many times." No comparative data was available from other schools or previous years.

Students in grades 2-6 tended to progress at least as well as, or somewhat better than, the students in the national norm group on standardized reading and mathematics achievement tests. The fall-to-spring grade equivalent gain by fundamentals students equaled or exceeded the growth that would be expected by the national norm group on thirteen of the 17 tests given at various grade levels. One of the largest gains was obtained by third graders in mathematics. The fall to spring percentile of the middle-ranking student increased from 51 to 72, while the grade equivalent changed from 3.1 to 4.4. Several cautions are given about interpretations of the test scores.

All but two parents who returned questionnaires said that they were satisfied with how much their child had learned in basic skills. More than half of the parents were dissatisfied with how much their child had learned the previous year (1976-77). About three-fourths of the parents said the conditions at the fundamentals school had a positive effect on their child's behavior/performance.

Ninety-seven percent of the parents indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the fundamentals school next year. Sixty-eight percent of the parents graded the school as Excellent (A), 30% graded it Above Average (B), and 2% said Average (C). All staff members said that they would like to work in the fundamentals school next year.

Students generally expressed positive attitudes toward the fundamentals school. The majority of the students felt that some of the work in school was interesting and challenging, and that some work was not. Less than 10% felt that most, or all, of the work was not interesting or challenging. Two thirds of the students said they were given the right amount of work to do; one-third felt they were given too much work. About 90% of the students thought their teacher was friendly toward them, was interested in them, was fair to them, and liked them.

Sixty-five percent of the students reported that they would like to attend the fundamentals school next year, 15% said they would not, and 20% were not sure. Forty-eight percent of the students graded the school as Excellent (A), 33% graded it Above Average (B), 11% said Average (C), 4% said Below Average (D), and 4% said Failure (F).

## West Area Fundamentals School

Somewhat more than half of the 390 students who attended the West Area Fundmentals School (located at Barton School) lived in the Barton neighborhood. Sixteen percent of the students were racial minorities, and 17% were economically eligible for reduced or free lunch. The middle-ranking student at each grade level scored higher than the average Minneapolis student on all standardized reading tests that were part of the fall 1977 city-wide testing program.

The expectation that basic skills, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, would be emphasized was chosen by 56% of the parents as the one most important reasons for enrolling their child in the fundamentals school. Among parents of students who walked to school, 22% said the most important reason was to keep their child from being bussed out of his/her home neighborhood.

Six subjects were identified as the primary areas to emphasize: reading, arithmetic, writing, spelling, grammar, and handwriting. In the primary classrooms, the amount of time spent each day on reading and language arts ranged from 1½ to 2½ hours. The intermediate classrooms generally spent two hours each day on reading and language arts. Mathematics instruction ranged from half an hour to one hour per day at grades 1-3 and from 45-60 minutes at grades 4-6. The intermediate classes in the fundamentals school

spent more time each week on reading/language arts and mathematics instruction than did the average Minneapolis classroom in a previous study. The primary classes spent about the same amount of time on reading/language arts as the average classroom, but more time on mathematics.

Three-fourths or more of the teachers and parents felt that the "right amount" of time was spent on reading, arithmetic, handwriting, spelling, social skills, citizenship, character education, and responsibility. A substantial proportion of the teachers did not feel that enough time was provided for grammar and language usage, creative abilities, music, art, and understanding other cultures.

Ninety-seven percent of the parents said that they were satisfied with the opportunities for parent involvement in the school's educational program. Compared with previous years, 38% of the parents had more contacts this year with their child's school, 15% said they had fewer contacts, and 42% had the same number of contacts.

Eleven of the 12 teachers in grades 1-6 assigned homework regularly, usually two or three times each week. About three-fourths of the parents felt that the amount of homework their child was expected to do was "about right."

Report cards were used that had letter grades for achievement, letter grades for effort, ratings of specific skills, and ratings of habits and attitudes. Although similarities among teachers existed, no standard grading procedure was used by all teachers. Eighty-eight percent of the parents indicated that most or all of the information in the report was easy to understand, and enough information was provided about their child's progress in school.

About two-thirds of the classroom teachers and half of the parents thought that disruptive student behavior was a "rare" interference with learning. None of the teachers, and only 1% of the parents, thought that student behavior was either a "constant" or "frequent" interference with learning. Both teachers and parents thought there was less disruptive behavior this year than in the previous year. Almost all staff members and parents expressed satisfaction with the school's discipline policy. Several staff members suggested a more consistent, or forceful, administration of the discipline policy.

The students indicated that negative interactions did occur among the students, and that students did not always follow the school rules. For example, sixteen percent of the students said that they had been hit or pushed by another student "many times" during the year. No comparative data was available from previous years, or for other schools.

Students in grades 2-6 tended to progress as well as, or better than, students in the national norm group on standardized reading and mathematics achievement tests. Some of the largest gains were made on word study skills. The fall-to-spring grade equivalent gains at grades 3, 4, and 5 were substantially more than expected: one year, six months (1.6) at grade 3, grade 4 (1.7), grade 5 (1.6). Grade equivalent gains on the vocabulary test were not as great, ranging from five months at second grade

to one year, two months at fifth grade. Several cautions are given about interpretations of the test scores.

Ninety-three percent of the parents said that they were satisfied with how much their child had learned in basic skills. About half of the parents were dissatisfied with how much their child had learned the previous year (1976-77). Ninety-five percent of the students indicated that they were happy with how much they had learned in school this year.

Eighty-nine percent of the parents planned to enroll their child in the West Area Fundamentals School next year. Forty-seven percent of the parents gave the fundamentals school a grade of Excellent (A), 44% said it was Above Average (B), 8% said Average (C), and 1% said Below Average (D).

Most of the students expressed favorably attitudes toward the fundamentals school. Eighty percent, or more, of the students felt that their teacher was friendly, was interested in them, was fair to them, and liked them. About two-thirds of the students said that they were given the right amount of work to do, and that some of the work was interesting and challenging, and some was not.

Sixty percent of the students indicated that they would like to attend the fundamentals school next year, 18% said they would not, and 22% were not sure. Thirty-nine percent of the students graded the school as Excellent (A), 34% graded the school Above Average (B), 19% graded it Average (C), 5% said it was Below Average (D), and 3% said Failure (F).